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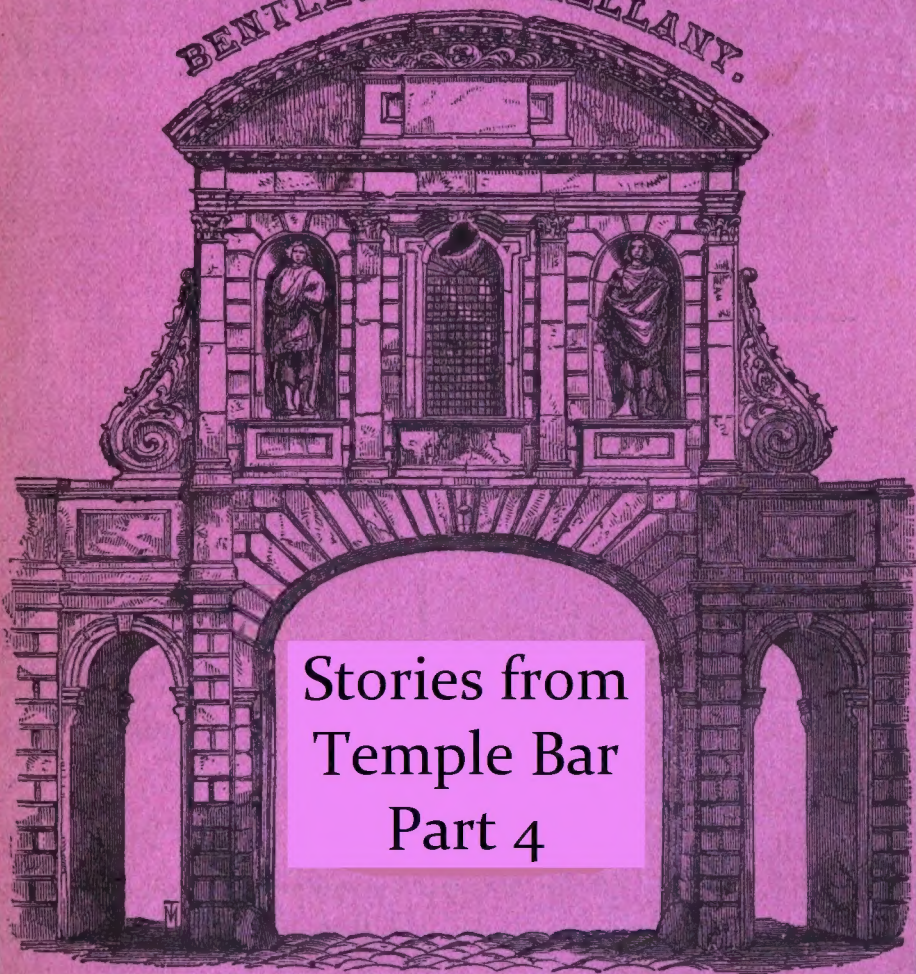
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TEMPLE BAR

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY.



Stories from Temple Bar Part 4

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Stories from Temple Bar, Part 4 (1878-1884)

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Vice Versa ; or, the Island of Jupon.

I.

IN NUBIBUS.

NOTHING but masses of grey vapour wreathed about us in fantastic forms. Whirled fitfully along, we seemed beyond the limits of the earth's attractions, and launched into the Infinite. Surely never before had balloon been involved in such a dense and continuous sea of clouds; surely never before had England, in the months of May and June, suffered from such a persistent north-east wind. My companion, intrepid aeronaut and Irishman as he was, luckily never for a moment had lost his nerve; as to myself, I confess that if I had not precisely lost mine, I was beginning to abandon myself to despair. Crouched in the bottom of the car, I was a prey to the most dismal apprehensions of coming ill. I endeavoured to reconcile myself to the loss of a world with which a while ago I had been utterly bored, but which I now regarded as a very paradise. In vain I reasoned with myself that I was contented to have got rid of it, and my arguments became almost curses on my folly for letting my craving for excitement take me up in a balloon.

Like Sir Charles Coldstream, I was "thirty-three and used up." I had exhausted life; and although I had not, like him, a title and twelve thousand per annum, yet my position was without duties and obligations—a position, in short, which induces valetudinarianism and ennui.

Attempting some slight distraction, I had availed myself of my friend the aeronaut's (Patrick O'Connor) invitation to a seat in his balloon, then ascending from Cremorne, and the result was that I was now being scurried through the regions of air, no one could say whither. And the poignancy of my regrets for misused advantages, the sharpness of my anguish for old neglected friendships, the bitterness of my sorrow for having abused a world so delightful and society so fascinating, became every moment more intensified. What goodness and beauty was there not in that world! What truth and charm in woman, what strength and wit in man!

My companion, blessed with infinite faith in his luck, began quietly munching a French roll and cold sausage, for it was now some hours since we ascended. But I could touch nothing but the wicker-covered bottle, of which I was by no means loth to partake.

Still we were hurried on amidst the wild and ever-changing masses of mist.

Having disposed of two sausages, a mutton pie, and some bread and cheese, the aeronaut stuck a toothpick leisurely between his teeth, and looked over the side of the balloon.

"By the saints," he said, "the clouds are opening—sure and we'll know our fate in a minute or so. If we've overshot America, we'll have a shy at landing on one of the islands of the Pacific."

"After all it might be preferable to a snowy summit of the Andes," I said faintly.

"If I find myself over a continent," rejoined the aeronaut, "I can regulate the descent so as to avoid mountain tops, but it's the sea I'm in dread of. If we're carried much farther southwards, we'll be over the great southern ocean, and faith it's not a mutton pie, two sausages, and a pot of Liebig that'll let us long defy destiny; and I confess a banquet to the antartic seals isn't to my mind at all, at all."

"I have been fearing that we had gone out of sight of the south or the north, east or west, for that matter—that we had forsooth been carried out into the Immeasurable."

"Faith but you can't get away from the earth's heavy attractions, never fear," O'Connor replied.

"Indeed you're right, no mistake, for I feel the power of earth's attractions peculiarly keen just now. Ah, what a fool," thought I to myself, "I have been to consider myself wearied of the world—to imagine that its pleasures had ceased to delight and its ambitions to interest me. Why, I'd sweep a crossing rather than not return to it."

"Look out for our descent," exclaimed the aeronaut, as if he had heard my thoughts. "Either our voyage or ourselves must end, and that pretty soon, for, see, the clouds are breaking. I raised my head and looked over the side of the car. It seemed to be a boat floating on a silver sea, for the sunshine breaking through the upper canopy of clouds revealed the silver lining of the lower. Then wave rolled on wave, till the eye began to pierce the depths beneath, in which the now blue heaven appeared to be mirrored.

"It is as I feared," said O'Connor. "We are over the sea. But, by St. Patrick," he cried, "there's the land," as the rift in the clouds widened, and, as it were, an exquisite emerald, circular in form and set in a silver rim, appeared far down in the distance.

"What the deuce can it be?" my companion exclaimed; and taking up a small chart of the world on Mercator's projection he studied it attentively.

"Is it Juan Fernandez?" I asked: "the island whereon Robinson Crusoe was cast?"

"It is too extensive by far," replied O'Connor. "In fact, I may

safely say," continued he after a pause, "that I don't know what the devil it is."

Leaning over the side of the car, I still continued to gaze through what seemed still to be white-crested billows. In the depths was revealed a realm which apparently lay in repose beneath the waves, like some enchanted city of legendary lore. It looked so tranquil and lovely, that one could hardly conceive that it could be an ordinary abode of man's disturbing passions, nor woman's either, for that matter. No longer a single emerald, it now seemed a beautiful piece of fairy embroidery, gemmed with great emeralds, and sparkling here and there with a diamond or two. The cloud-shadows which flitted across it might have been its inhabitant spirits, jauntily gadding about, unclogged by the restrictions of earthly locomotion.

We were still descending, but soon my friend suffered more gas to escape, and we descended much more rapidly, but in a slanting direction. The unknown land began now to lose its magical aspect, and, rising out of the imaginary sea created by the atmosphere, lay like a map beneath us. Its further limits became less clearly defined, the coast lost its extreme regularity of outline, and became more distinctly marked by the white line of surf. But we were still over the blue ocean, brilliant and tranquil, though now seen to be heaving gently like the bosom of sleeping innocence; but a dangerous enemy to us, to have caught by which would have been almost certain death.

The roaring of the ever-surging lines of surf could now be distinctly heard by us as we obliquely crossed them, and it was evident that landing on the Gold Coast was child's-play as compared with the difficulty that must be encountered in piercing these battalions of foam-crested rocks.

O'Connor maintained his calmness of demeanour, and occupied himself in regulating the descent of the balloon, so as to pass the sea and surf and alight upon the land.

Mindful of the familiar exhortation in passenger steamboats, "not to speak to the man at the wheel," I satisfied myself with silently wondering whither I was going. I endeavoured to recollect the geography with which my mind has been impregnated at a public school, but I had only been taught geography as comprehended by the Greeks and Romans. I recollected precisely the position of the Piræus, and could enumerate the principal divisions of Asia Minor eighteen hundred years ago, but I could not, for the life of me, recall any information of the slightest practical use on the present occasion.

"The Gold Coast surf-boats would indeed be useless here," at last I exclaimed, wearied with my friend's indefatigable researches on the chart; "but, by the way, are you sure that this is not really the

Gold Coast after all, and that when we thought we were being carried towards South America we had really taken a turn to the eastward?" said I.

"The rays of the sun are not sufficiently vertical. No, there is no doubt in my mind that we have circumballooned the globe to the extent of a third, and that we'll see the constellation of the Southern Cross to-night."

"Always provided, as the lawyers say, we survive," quickly added I.

"Bedad, and that's true for you; of course we'll have to let the balloon gently down in some convenient place before we may talk with confidence about what we'll see to-night, but I have fallen on my legs so often that it's not much fear I have of the result, be sure," cheerily replied the aeronaut.

A gentle current of air conveyed us within the borders of the land, and the musical cadence of the surf murmured in our ears as our balloon floated placidly across it. Our descent became rapid, but always in an oblique or slanting direction. My former sense of danger had been rapidly overcome by rapture since our release from the clouds, and was now completely merged in hope. I gazed downwards, still entranced by the wonderful charm of the prospect. Presently the panorama enlarged into a distinctly and beautifully painted map, bright and realizable as an Ordnance Survey, with fields and woods, towns, roads, and farmsteads in various lines, and before many minutes we clearly discerned the inhabitants like ants upon the highways. It is humiliating to observe how strikingly human beings resemble ants when contemplated from either a physical or intellectual height. And now the momentous question occurred as to whether, supposing we lighted on our legs upon the land, these ants would have stings in their tails.

"We are evidently coming down upon a civilised country," said the aeronaut. "What the deuce can it be—eh? Hallo, the wind's getting up."

As he spoke a slight squall caught the balloon, and caused it to careen in intoxicated fashion, as we rapidly passed over what was evidently a great city, with spires and domes glistening in the sunshine. Woodlands and gardens, a river and tributary streams succeeded, with suburban villas and villages. We even fancied that we saw the ants stopping on the highways to observe and probably marvel at us. We must have traversed a distance of fifty miles over an agreeable country before the wind lulled, and the aeronaut, who had been fixedly peering downwards, exclaimed, "Now's our time," and, freely opening the valve, our descent seemed dangerously hasty.

But the intrepid one was right, for he perceived that the wind was

freshening. Before, however, we could reach the verdant expanse of open meadow land at which he was aiming, a sudden squall caught us, and we were again whirled along, till it dashed us amongst the tree-tops of an adjacent wood.

II.

OUR DESCENT ON THE ISLAND.

WHEN I regained my senses, for I remember nothing after our collision with the tree-tops, I found myself reclining, with my head raised and supported by a young and handsome woman. She was kneeling behind me while gazing upon me with an expression of deep interest and amazement. Two or three young women and a young man of timid aspect were also standing near, while at a little distance I perceived a corresponding group attending upon my friend, whose head was similarly carefully supported. Bending tenderly over me, the young woman said something in clear and soft, yet firm, tones, which seemed to me to bear an extraordinary resemblance to Hindoostanee. I had passed two years of my life in Bengal, and although I had not professed to study the language, I had picked up a certain conversational acquaintance with it. "What," I uttered faintly, in the common Bengalee dialect—"where am I?"

"He speaks Juponian," I understood her to exclaim, in a tone of delight. "It seems he is a man, and not a genius or spirit."

"Oh yes," I replied decidedly, "a man without doubt, and certainly no genius, if what my friends tell me be true."

"But whence have you come?" she inquired. "Have you a habitation in the clouds?"

"In the clouds?—good gracious, no. Have you never seen a——" balloon I was about to say, but was prevented by my ignorance of any Hindoostanee term for it. I then endeavoured to explain to her that we had started from a distant land in the balloon, and had been carried we knew not whither, till we had thus found ourselves in her own and her friends' amiable hands.

"What wonderful bold things!" said my questioner. "No wonder we hear of men's rights movements, when lands exist beyond the ocean stream which can nurture such adventurous males as these. But really, my pretty fellow, you are fortunate in not having fallen into ruder hands. Believe me that the sanctity of your sex will receive the fullest respect from us; and I hope that you and your companion, who appears, like yourself, to be suffering from no serious injury, will allow yourselves to be under no apprehensions of ill-treatment at our hands."

"On the contrary," I replied, "it seems to me that we have dropped

into Elysium, and that the fair hands of amiable and blessed spirits are tending us."

"What a charming fellow!" said my handsome supporter, turning to one of her companions.

"No bones appear to be broken," said one of them, a girl of sedate aspect and some thirty years' experience of the world, with a double gold-rimmed eyeglass on her nose, and a golden-topped clouded cane in her hand, as she proceeded to punch me delicately in various parts of my body.

"Oh no! I think I'm all right—a little bruised perhaps," I said, as I made an effort and stood upright, while an evident buzz of admiration went round my feminine attendants; and I overheard the exclamation of "What a splendid fellow!" from at least one of them.

"Come, let me conduct you to the house," said the lady who had been supporting me. "Allow me to offer you my arm."

"I thank you," I replied. "I certainly do feel rather stiff, but I cannot lean upon a lady, I am not sufficiently bad for that."

"Surely," she said, "you cannot really be such a prude as to think it improper?"

"I think that it is rather my part to offer you my arm."

"What! a gentleman offer a lady his arm? Is that the custom in the clouds, or wherever you come from?"

She was still holding her arm towards me, and as I did feel somewhat faint, I did not pursue the argument further, but accepted the proffered attention wonderingly. I felt, too, a slight dizziness of head, and general disturbance of the system after my fall from the balloon, which made thinking a more difficult process even than usual. I was not quite oblivious, however, to the fact that I had a comrade, and I perceived, on turning my head, that he was leaning, almost with an air of affection, on the arms of two of the young ladies. He was more unfortunately situated than myself, in respect to language, for he knew nothing of Hindoostanee; but he had an expressive countenance, and by dint of his mother tongue and various remarkable gestures and attitudes he seemed to be making himself well understood and very agreeable to his fair supporters.

Mingling with my sensation of bewilderment, I recollect, were the pangs of hunger; in fact, I imagined it to be near that time in the afternoon in which the inhabitants of most civilised countries dine. But there appeared at present no signs of food, and the horrid thought crossed my mind that these lovely inhabitants might after all be nothing but cannibals, or perhaps, godlike, they neither ate nor drank. Dismissing these gloomy thoughts for the present, I looked around me. There, amongst the tree-tops of a grove of Indian mangoes, still bobbed fitfully our collapsed balloon, while around was an undulating

extent of park-like land, adorned with clumps of trees, among which I discovered palms and others of a tropical or semi-tropical character. Our party consisted of half a dozen women and girls, dressed in a sort of French bathing or Bloomer costumes, while the young men of insipid aspect were clothed in long flowered dressing-gowns, with muslin caps on their heads, allowing their hair, which had been suffered to grow into ringlets, to escape over their shoulders. The women, on the other hand, had their hair cut quite short, *à la militaire*.

In front of us flowed a little river, crossed by a bridge, which resembled that quaint structure seen on a willow-patterned plate. Crossing it, at the moment I was looking, was a namby-pamby young man, who was skipping playfully towards a party of persons seated under a fanciful summer-house in a gaily flowered garden rising in terraces from the river ; evidently part of the grounds belonging to a pretty and fantastic house decorated with pinnacles and quaint ornaments.

"Faith and it is on our legs we've fallen, and into one of the agreeablest countries out of Tipperary I've seen for a long time," said O'Connor as we overtook his party.

"The style of architecture rather reminds one of China," I observed on my part.

"Divil a bit ; it's more like flesh and blood than China." I was beginning to think my friend slightly delirious till I found he was gazing admiringly at some of the glancing ankles which were escorting us. And in truth the legs and feet of our fair conductors were remarkably stalwart and elegantly shaped, and their costume too displayed them to the very best advantage. Below their belted tunics, made of light material, loose garments resembling our knickerbockers were either tied with ribbands below the knees, or hung unconfined. Their lower limbs, I have said, were bare and exquisitely white, and on their feet they wore coloured shoes or sandals tied about the ankle with ribbands, while on their heads were small and perky-looking hats.

Their faces were not exactly fairer, but paler, than any complexions which I remembered to have seen in my travels : it was the beautiful paleness of the city. Their eyes were dark, and their noses beautifully chiselled : they resembled, in short, the natives of the Punjaub, many of whom are as fair as many Europeans. Connecting this idea with their language, it occurred to me that this people had some affinity with some of the natives of British India. But I had no opportunity as yet to ponder on the mental problem, for we arrived at the bridge, and crossing over it were conducted to the summer-house.

I now perceived that the party seated therein consisted solely of males engaged in drinking tea. As we drew near they all rose and came buzzing about us in a manner which induced me almost to kick one or two.

"Oh, we wanted so much to come and see the wonderful creatures we heard you had found," I understood one of them to say, "but uncle would not let us; he said it was immodest to run after strange beings."

"And he said it might be dangerous too," added another mincing bearded animal, whose general effeminacy of appearance inspired me with deep disgust; "but what funny creatures they are—they look like men and yet are dressed like women," he said, contemplating us coolly through a double eye-glass.

"Yes, they are men," I replied with much emphasis, and with as meaning a look as I could assume. My conductress, seeing me displeased, ordered them to retire, and proceeded to institute careful inquiries into our wants, and further to my delight informed me that dinner would be ready in an hour; and she recommended a warm bath and change of attire, so as not to further offend the susceptibilities of the young men. This intelligence, I mean the news of dinner, wonderfully enhanced my hostess in my opinion, I need scarcely say, after my long fast. We were then conducted to two neatly furnished bedrooms to dress by a sort of valet, who in answer to our inquiries (we must be excused making them under the circumstances) stated that our hostess, the head of the house, was a young spinster noble, and that her brother was at present keeping house for her. They were extending their hospitalities to a party of friends, and an old bachelor uncle was playing propriety as chaperon.

From this fellow's information and from what we had ourselves seen, we arrived at the conclusion that our balloon had alighted upon a land with a civilisation of its own; in which woman enjoyed not only equality with man, which many are just now demanding for her in England, but also had very positively usurped what we consider man's true and rightful position.

"Are you going to put on this dress?" inquired my friend after we had enjoyed our bath, as he came from his room into mine. "It looks to me more suitable for breakfast than for dinner."

"It seems, however, the correct thing here," I replied, "and as they've been very civil in providing it I shall wear it, if only to avoid being considered churlish."

"Well, they've been so far monstrous civil and hospitable I'll admit, only it goes against the grain rather to appear dressed up like one of the finicking fellows in this funniest of countries," added O'Connor.

At all events, we needn't assume their bearing if we put on their dress," I said consolingly. "Wait a bit and we'll show these young men what stuff Englishmen are made of, never fear."

"I believe you, me boy," cheerfully replied the aeronaut. So we arrayed ourselves in long silken tunics embroidered in fanciful devices, slipped our feet into red satin slippers, and prepared to descend. I enjoyed a silent laugh over my friend's appearance, but I was greatly in fear that perhaps one of these effeminate men might accidentally "tread on the tail" of his coat and raise his Celtic blood.

"Admirable!" exclaimed our hostess, meeting us at the foot of the stairs. "Pardon my remarking that that dress becomes you exceedingly. I hope you do not feel any ill-effects from the fatigue of your journey? Let me usher you into the drawing-room."

The sun's last glances were diffused in golden light in an apartment handsomely furnished, about which the guests were picturesquely grouped; the women, like the men, having dressed in silken and embroidered garments, though similar in form to their morning attire. When dinner was announced each lady walked up to a gentleman and escorted him to the dining-room. Lady Rosedale selected me, while O'Connor was escorted by Lady Pansy Harebell, the confidante and chief friend of our hostess. I need scarcely say I did ample justice to the good things provided, though at first my appetite rather astonished the young men, who seemed only able to nibble and play with the minute pieces placed upon their plates. And when I very naturally helped myself from a decanter at my elbow, most satirical glances were exchanged. What amused me immensely was that a young woman on O'Connor's right was plying him with wine with most mischievous intent; but, bless her, the aeronaut had graduated in the whisky of his own beloved isle, and was quite capable of drinking her and all her companions under the table. After cheese and dessert had been handed round, the old uncle gave the signal to retire in the most approved fashion, while our hostess politely opened the door for us and the other men, and we were socially obliged to withdraw. Fancy our astonishment when, a short time after our retreat, we distinctly inhaled the aroma of delicious Turkish tobacco, or what smelt like it, emanating from the dining-room!

"To think that I should live," I said, "to find myself thus prematurely banished from a dinner-table, by Jove! I often sincerely deplored the cruel fate of an agreeable neighbour, who's had to rise in obedience to the hostess's signal, just as I was in the middle of one of my best stories."

"Well, there's one thing I'm pretty certain of, it won't be long before I console myself with the solaces of a certain little black cutty of my acquaintance," said my friend.

"I dare say when the gentlemen—I mean the ladies—join us we shall have to sit and smile upon them, while they make various and incoherent attempts at flirtation."

"Faith," rejoined the aeronaut, "if they attempt any flirtation I'll be even with them. I feel just in the humour, be gorra! I can't talk their lingo, but I fancy the language of the eye is understood as well here as in Athlone, and by St. Patrick——"

"Hush," said I, "here is our host."

The brother approached and politely requested us to be seated on a sort of ottoman. He might have made a fine young man if he had had the nonsense knocked out of him, in some civilisation not topsyturvy. He evidently regarded us with abhorrence, but forced himself to be civil, in deference to the wishes of his sister, for whom I saw that he cherished a sincere affection; but indeed he and his companions were not unwilling to obtain more information from us, for they possessed all the curiosity which we have been accustomed, in England, to attribute to the feminine sex. Two or three who had taken up needlework or books put them down and settled around us. We were apparently not looked upon with quite the same awe and astonishment as the gorilla, but we were clearly regarded as great curiosities.

I found that they accounted for their own origin by two different theories: the orthodox affirmed they were descended from first parents who had sprung from the Lotos, or blue water-lilies, but the heterodox asserted that the first settlers had been shipwrecked on the surrounding rocks. Now I know that the Hindoos were undoubtedly enterprising and commercially adventurous in old times, and when I coupled the fact of their language resembling Hindoostanee with what I comprehended of their system of dogmatism, I concluded that they were descended from a party of shipwrecked Hindoos, from whom the present nation had inherited the effeminate intellect of that effeminate people.

When our hostess returned to us she came up to me saying, "The more I think of it the more I am overcome with admiration at the pluck and energy of you two men. Fancy men achieving such feats! You see, if you had been women I should not have been so much surprised. Indeed, there was a wonderful woman here once, who actually performed on a curious machine a flight of fifty miles, but that was quite unheard of before."

"Well, the women in our country are considered rather flighty, sometimes, but, you see, you look on men and women differently. We expect men to be bold and adventurous, but women soft and sensitive," I said, trying to look particularly sentimental at this really beautiful woman.

Returning my warm glances she replied, "I am sure you and your friend must be much fatigued, and though I scarcely like to part with you, it would be but cruel kindness to detain you longer from repose. To-morrow we will row you on the river, and perhaps you would like a ride in the afternoon, if we can find you a quiet horse."

We both thanked her, chuckling inwardly at the notion of the quiet horse.

My friend had, I noticed, been particularly still all the evening, but whether he had been engaged in a desperate flirtation with Lady Harebell, while I was also agreeably occupied, I cannot engage to say; or after all it might have been the craving for his tobacco, which I observed that he attacked with unusual vigour directly we had reached our dormitories.

The next morning nothing would induce O'Connor to reassume his petticoats, so when we descended to breakfast of course I had to explain that my friend was generally a rather eccentric and intractable fellow; but Rosedale merely smiled and said something charming to me, which made me forget my own momentary displeasure.

Seeing a sword hanging on a peg I examined it, and was horribly astonished to hear that my beautiful viscountess was an officer in their army, which was soldiered by Amazons. These, however, were rarely used, as they had no foreign enemies, so their only duties were to preserve order in the state. I must say I was pleased to learn this, as I had already arrived at that stage when the thought of Lady Rosedale even pricking her finger would have caused me acute agony. As for O'Connor, he was in the usual state of susceptible and amorous Irishmen.

After breakfast we were preparing to adjourn to the river for a row, when a messenger (a woman of course, and riding cavalier fashion, as I found all the women did in this country) arrived in breathless haste to announce the approach of the Lady Chamberlain, who, hearing of our strange arrival, was coming to escort us to the capital and to the presence of the Court. Immediately the young men rushed off to assume more splendid vestments, while Lady Rosedale and a few other women and ourselves adjourned to the smoking-room. What astonished me was the peculiar grave look Lady Rosedale had when she heard of our summons to the metropolis. The reason of it I soon after learnt.

III.

OUR SUMMONS TO THE CAPITAL.

At about eleven o'clock a fresh messenger arrived, saying that the Lady Chamberlain was close at hand, and soon after we discerned a

cloud of dust down the road, through which emerged a carriage with four horses surrounded by a guard of honour of lancers.

The Lady Chamberlain stepped from the carriage and disappeared, with Lady Rosedale and several officials, into the house. I must say I was not impressed with the high functionary of state; she was an ugly fat old woman, dressed most outrageously, and she had a look of great cruelty and meanness.

The cavalry, on the other hand, were charming. Armed and equipped not unlike our own lancers, they looked as if they might be dangerous in any situation rather than on the field of battle. A gay and handsome young woman, the chief officer, and the subaltern no less pretty, but younger, chinked their sabres about with quite the air of the cavalry of the old school. They came and chucked O'Connor and me under the chin, after the most approved military style; but the intrepid could not stand that, so quietly took his assailant up in his arms and kissed her, and I was rather astonished that a scene was not the consequence; but either the officer liked the proceeding, or a radical movement had already begun to arise in the army.

Both Lady Rosedale and Lady Pansy Harebell insisted on accompanying us to the metropolis, so the next day we set out in two carriages, surrounded and guarded by the pretty lancers. As I reclined comfortably in the back of Lady Rosedale's carriage, she said:

"I don't think your head can be in any real peril, that is, if you are cautious."

"It has been turned by you already," I said, "and I do not think it is in danger of being turned again, however handsome the women may be in the capital."

"I see by your jest that you do not fear death; but, as I've said, I really do think that you need be under no apprehensions."

"Your tones are serious. Surely you cannot mean that there is any actual cause for alarm? Neither your courts of justice nor your sovereign could be so inhospitable as to condemn a stranger for having been accidentally blown upon your country, or because he has been educated in a different social code to your own?"

"Have people never been condemned to death in your country because they have been educated differently to the ruling fashion in religion or politics? How delightfully liberal all your minds must be!"

"I did not precisely say that."

"You see, your views are so very heretical and radical; they might even think it kindness to let you go through the tomb."

"Go through the tomb!"

"In the hope that you might receive a better education in the next life, and learn to take different and truer views of the relations of the sexes."

"In the next life ! But really—you speak with much confidence about it—the undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns," I said, and then endeavoured to expound our orthodox Anglican theory concerning the afterwards.

"Good gracious," she replied, "we mean nothing so comprehensive, and apparently incomprehensible, as that, when we talk of the next life ; we simply intend to refer to the next transmigration which your soul will undergo ; and I think the judges would be of opinion that your soul had made a mistake, and got into a woman's body instead of a man's, and that therefore you ought to be killed, in order that you might have an opportunity of correcting your blunder and selecting a more suitable tenement for a new existence."

"But I am perfectly contented with my present tenement. Great heavens ! I hope they won't cut short my lease of life because they fancy I should get on better in another house—I should say, body."

"Of course they would allow you to make away with yourself, if you preferred it."

"To tender my own notice to quit, in fact—well, if they let it depend upon that, I shall hold on till the very last quarter-day. So you consider *felo de se* a mere shuffling off this mortal coil, as our great poet expressed it, in the hopes of securing a less tangled coil ?"

"Those under judicial sentence for mere mistakes in life are permitted to destroy themselves—but we hold that unauthorised suicides will be born to a condition of great suffering, or meet with terrible misfortunes in the next existence."

"People, then, are to be rewarded or punished in the next life according to their deeds in this ?"

"So say our priests, at all events. They say that the wicked and gluttonous may sink so low as to become wild beasts or pigs again, while the good will rise higher in the intellectual scale, till they attain the eternal rest."

"And what is that ? Can you elucidate it ?"

"The fact is that I neither profess to know nor care. For my part, I'm a Liberal, and what is called a sceptic, and disposed to doubt whether there is any truth in any of these theories, and I am even inclined to suspect that religious peoples' recollections of past existences are in reality dreams of the present."

"So your religious people profess to remember their past existences ?"

Rosedale only shrugged her shoulders in reply.

"By Jove !" I exclaimed, "all this is very remarkable," thinking that I had found in this theory of transmigration a resemblance to the Brahminical faith, which, taking into consideration the language, rendered their Indian descent almost indisputable.

"I hear you so constantly say 'By Jove!' Is he your God?"

"No; he was the ruling divinity of the Greeks and Romans, European nations which flourished a long time ago."

"And you still adopt their appellations for the deity?"

"No, not altogether—we only use them to add emphasis to our speech, in making asseverations of no importance."

"Yet I suppose they were once held very sacred?"

"Doubtless they were."

"And were the people who used them distinguished, or highly civilised?"

"So distinguished and highly civilised that, notwithstanding the very different aspect of our modern civilisation, we principally educate our sons in their history and literature."

"You consider, then, that their history was noble, their literature excellent, but their religion untrue?"

"Precisely."

"Perhaps in the future nations may arise which will consider your history noble, your literature excellent, and your religion untrue?"

"No, that can never be."

"Why not?"

"Because our religion is true, and will continue to take root and to grow." Theirs was false.

My fair companion then relapsed into silence, evidently thinking over the subject of our conversation.

We were passing during all this time through a country which combined suggestions of Italian and Dutch scenery. Rugged and wooded hills opened to valleys wherein the vines were trained in festoons from tree to tree, and over the walls and porches of farm-houses and cottages. The dwellings were generally red, with lofty gables, and an air of quaint neatness pervaded them all. They stood in formal little gardens, glowing with flower-beds, and shaded by tall cypress-trees, which reminded me of my childhood's toy-trees in model farmhouse boxes. Little canals or tanks adorned with blue and white water-lilies imparted the tranquil charm of water to the landscape. I remarked one peculiarity, and that was that there were no children to be seen. Lady Rosedale soon explained this by saying that the children were sent directly it was possible to the public *lactaria*, as the mothers had other duties more onerous and important than nursing children, who were usually dry-nursed by the men. I also remarked that there was no destitution observable.

"Destitution?" she exclaimed. "Why, whatever do you mean?"

"Have you, then, no cases of starvation, no want or poverty?"

"Certainly not indeed. How could it arise? As the population has increased outlying districts have been brought under cultivation."

"But the time may come when you have no outlying districts left to cultivate?"

"At all events that time has not arrived yet, and cannot for some generations. One can only provide for two or three lifetimes beyond one's own."

"But you expect your own soul to reappear—and that may occur at many generations hence, may it not?"

"That is theology which is distinct from political economy. Is it not so in your country?"

"Yes, certainly it is."

"But you mentioned starvation. Surely you cannot mean that deaths occur from actual want of food in England?"

"I regret to say that it is too true."

"Your rulers, perhaps, think it right or expedient to let them 'go through the tomb'?"

"Indeed they entertain no such notion—and we have a deal of poverty and misery which comes little short of starvation."

"Then your country has become over-populated?"

"We do not consider that the reason, but it is true that our country is very thickly peopled in proportion to other states—few are, or ever have been, more densely populated."

"And you have no outlying districts?"

"Well, we have enormous territories beyond seas, scarcely inhabited at all."

"Too sterile, perhaps, to be brought under cultivation and produce food?"

"On the contrary, many of our colonies, as we call them, possess magnificent fertile districts, at present totally uncultivated, but capable of supporting millions with the sustenance which they could produce."

"Yet your people suffer from want of food, and even actually die from starvation, without any apparent reason existing for their going through the tomb—which, even according to our orthodox system, is, of course, an uncertain and vexatious proceeding? What on odd system of government you must have—or rather, what a want of 'system'!"

"Not at all. We have the grandest, most orderly, and most enlightened and liberal system which the world has yet known."

"I think you said that your religion teaches that those who die in an unsanctified condition are relegated to eternal perdition?"

"Just so."

"Then are these unhappy weak persons who die of starvation supposed to be eternally lost if they are not religious? If so, your boasted government must deserve the heaviest censure."

"Well—you see religion is one thing and political economy another, and the tax-payers' purse-strings a third."

“ Ah, I can recognise the tax difficulty ! We levy ours principally on babies and sugar—and equalise the state burdens, as regards bachelors, by making them disburse a fine, increasing in weight on every leap year in which they are still unmarried.”

“ An admirable idea. Are those the spires and pinnacles of the capital which I see rising from the mist of yonder valley ?”

“ Yes, dear stranger,” said Rosedale, in a voice that trembled slightly. “ Our journey is nearly at an end. Have you enjoyed it ?”

“ Oh yes,” I murmured. “ I have been very happy.”

“ Alas ! I fear that we may be compelled to part—I know too well the dissolute habits of our Princess Regnante—and I dread lest she should invite you to her Court—clever, beautiful being—and that you should forget your poor Rosedale amid the throng of gay and brilliant women.”

“ I am sure none can be more brilliant than my Rosedale,” I exclaimed.

“ Oh ! can you mean what you say ? Could you be content to remain ever with me ?—to forget that marvellous balloon, and your own strange land, with its enlightened government and people dying of starvation ? Could you remain in this Island of Jupon, and dream only of love and——”

“ And the excellent system of nursery-gardens,” I said slyly.

“ Yes, of love and nursery-gardens—oh say, will you be mine ?”

“ Could you consent to share your coronet with an absolute stranger—who quite forgot to bring his genealogical tree with him when he embarked on his aerial voyage ?”

“ Race and rank lose all value where you are concerned. But tell me,” she said after a pause, “ would you not prefer to wed me after the manner of your own country—to take me to wife rather than that I should take you to husband ?”

“ But where am I to find a parson ? Even hotels on the Italian Lakes keep their clergymen, and fit up a room for an English Church—but here I am utterly beyond the sphere of Anglicanism—neither surplice, vestments, nor Geneva gown can regale my eyes in this outlandish, unorthodox, yet pleasant place.”

“ Did you not tell me that the ceremony could now be performed before a registrar ?”

“ I did—and before a registrar then it shall be performed—if you wish it, dear Rosedale.”

She responded to this by gently insinuating her arm around my waist, and kissing me upon the lips.

We rattled into the metropolis of the queendom of Jupon. Bright and clean thoroughfares, and houses gaily painted in various colours, gave it an aspect of unreality. Women jauntily promenaded the

streets with a flower or a toothpick between the teeth. The men, in their long embroidered garments, looked very properly discreet, though I saw some casting roguish glances at the women.

Our cavalcade stopped before an edifice of stone, evidently some public office, and we were not mistaken, for Lady Rosedale alighted, and on her return informed us that she had entered into her recognisances to produce us when called upon to do so, and that she had obtained permission to take charge of us for the present. The gay young officer and his troop, saluting us, immediately afterwards departed.

"I would have taken you to my own chamber," my fair companion said, as the carriages once more proceeded, "but I thought it better for *your* reputation to take you to a public hotel, where I know you will be comfortably lodged."

When we, accordingly, pulled up at the hotel we found the aeronaut and Lady Pansy Harebell also descending from their carriage, and from the intrepid one's solicitous attentions, and the glances he and his companion were exchanging, I saw pretty plainly that they were on terms of great affection. And a merry little dinner we had, in a charming room overlooking the Grande Place —.

IV.

OUR MARRIAGE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

WE were visited the next morning by the Lady Chamberlain herself, a pompous, portly but polite dame whose consequential manner well suited her position. But instead of bringing an order for our incarceration, or otherwise confirming the apprehensions which I had begun to entertain of our heads being in danger, she only informed us that the Princess Regnante desired our presence at Court, and had particularly commanded us that we should appear in our own costumes. On hearing this intelligence Rosedale turned decidedly pale, and I gathered from her remarks, after the departure of the Chamberlain, that she knew the Court too well not to feel alarmed at any quiet young man's exposure to its dissipations.

"Our Queen," she said, "is advanced in years and has ceased to take any direct part in the affairs of the state, while the Princess, possessing the most pleasing address, is at heart a *bonne vivante* and a most determined flirt, and I cannot but dread the contamination of her set of gay and glittering belles. Ah, indeed, I fear you will soon forget your Rosedale."

"Never," I cried enthusiastically, "while life remains, and to prove my words let us go to the registrar and bind ourselves irrevocably." Rushing into my arms she kissed me rapturously and led me off at

once to the registrar's office, where we met O'Connor and his inamorata, who had come to a similar conclusion.

* * * * *

Towards evening a close carriage conveyed us to the palace. An avenue of gigantic cypresses conducted to an open space adorned with tinted statuary, and displaying the silvered spires and pinnacles of the palace glistening palely in the rays of the limelights just lighted. A guard was drawn up within the brazen gates, on the pillars of which were two winged cats. In the vestibule we were received by pages richly dressed, while a crowd of young ladies, splendid in silk and satin, wearing robes over their curtailed tunics, added a wonderful brightness to the scene.

We were immediately brought into the presence of the Princess Regnante. Rosedale presented us. We were much struck with the splendid physique of her Royal Highness. She was emphatically a fine woman. Blond, and inclining to *embonpoint*, she looked a goddess amidst them all—she received us graciously, kissing us on both cheeks—a custom, the aeronaut avers, which still obtains at the Viceregal Court in Dublin, where ladies presented are similarly saluted.

I did not object to the ceremony, under the circumstances, but Rosedale, who, although a Peeress, was a Radical, whispered to me that it ought to be abolished, with other antiquated fripperies of etiquette. And I observed that she turned pale when the Princess took me aside and entered into a long conversation respecting the state polity, political economy, and social life of Great Britain and Ireland. The princess evidently possessed a clear and comprehensive intellect, but, nevertheless, I found some difficulty in enabling her to grasp the details of our system of government. Limited monarchy, Lords, Commons, Houses of Convocation, Vestries and Local Boards combined to embarrass her; and woman's position sorely perplexed her.

"If you allow a Queen to govern you," she said, "why deny political power to other women?"

"The Queen only exercises it by the advice of her ministers—and they are held accountable for any mistake which the Crown may commit——"

"Have you many and good laws?" she inquired.

"Oh yes—a thousand volumes full, or thereabouts."

"Goodness gracious—how can one learn them—it must occupy a lifetime——"

"Nobody does. Professional lawyers devote themselves to studying portions of the laws, and obtain a thorough comprehension of those portions."

"But surely members of the general public cannot be expected to consult lawyers before every action of life—they must, then, be held excused for wrong-doing?"

"Not at all. Every Englishman is supposed to know the laws; and he is not excused for any breach by pleading ignorance."

"Yours is a remarkable country." After a pause she asked, "Were you a husband in England?"

"No," I replied; "I have been living in bachelor chambers by myself."

"By yourself? How very wrong!" said the Princess. "And you really all walk about the streets in this—well, I must call it so, indelicate costume?"

"Certainly, your Royal Highness—and women, on the other hand, encumber their lower limits with long skirts, except when they dance in ballets or perform in burlesques, at the theatres, and then their garments are scantier than yours."

"That is to say, when they will be most looked at. I'm afraid society in England must be extremely demoralised."

"On the contrary, it prides itself upon its strict morality and religion."

"Does it practise asceticism in religion?"

"Not inconveniently. It makes a point of going to church in its best clothes on the morning of the first day of the week—at a reasonable time after breakfast—and all those persons who cannot afford to keep cellars of wine or barrels of beer at home are restrained from drinking during certain hours on that day."

"But why should not the richer people be similarly restrained? Have they no need of religion?"

"Well, you see, they have so much respectability that possibly they require no religious exercises."

"Does the amount of strong drink consumed in your country diminish in consequence of this prohibitory legislation?"

"On the contrary, the fiscal returns inform us that the quantity increases."

"What is the advantage, then, of worrying your people to no good?"

"Legislators and enthusiasts persist in believing that our national fault of drunkenness can be cured by restrictions."

"Why do they not allure your people from their exciting potations by other excitements or enticements?"

"It is considered that to offer them the pleasures of art, or even intellectual amusements, on this first day of the week, the holy day, would destroy its religious character."

"I perceive: the rich are desirous of preserving a certain asceticism in the religion of the land, which does not inconvenience themselves,

because they can, of course, obtain amusements on the other days and spend this one day in tranquil ease at home. But proceed, tell me about the general relations of classes."

"Your Royal Highness poses me ; just at present we are in a condition of transition—nothing is fixed, nothing certain. Every system of government, law, education, and religion is called in question, not merely in England, but throughout Europe ; the rights of property are doubted, and an increasing party would admit your sex to an equal share in the political power of the country."

"England must be a most interesting country. Could you take me there in your balloon?"

"Not with certainty, I fear. We might find ourselves in New Guinea, which is still only inhabited by birds of Paradise and savages with poisoned spears ; or we might descend upon some cannibal island, where we should afford a feast to untutored barbarians, who could not even pay us the compliment of serving us up in civilised cookery."

The Princess shuddered at the thought of being converted into a ragout or fricassee.

"We will stay here, beautiful stranger," she said, "and you and your companion shall be lodged in the palace."

"Pray accept my most grateful thanks, your Royal Highness, for this most amiable proof of your hospitality and condescension, but we have consented to continue to accept the hospitalities of the Viscountess Rosedale."

"Rosedale !" uttered the Princess quickly. "Ah ! you descended upon her estate, I think ; you have been staying with her since, and she presented you to-day ? Is she married ?" she inquired, turning to a young woman near her, whose handsome and rather clever face was spoiled by her intense air of affectation.

"Rosedale married ? By Jupiter, no, I imagine not. She rather used to be in my set at one time, and my set don't marry," said the lady, languidly putting her glass in her eye, as if it were her mind's eye.

The Princess beckoned to the Lady Chamberlain, and whispered something to her when she approached, of which I caught the ominous words, "Let her be married within a week." At that instant the Prince arose, and the gentlemen began to sweep out of the room. I was compelled to follow them, and, with a low bow to the Princess, I went out with the aeronaut ; each of us having thrust his hands deeply into his trousers' pockets, with the air of a man who feels himself degraded, but finds alleviation in an assumption of indifference. Arrived at the drawing-room, we had to endure the usual cross-examination from the men as to our habits, manners, and customs in

England. However, I found considerable amusement in opening their minds, which I did pretty freely.

Later in the evening more guests arrived for a ball, which took place in a spacious pavilion, which represented the interior of a grove of tulip-trees, in which lights glittered from all the flower-cups. Again extending to me the tips of her fingers, the Princess Regnante did me the honour to lead me to the dance; and I performed with her Royal Highness in a sort of waltz, to which I found the modern *trois-temps* perfectly adaptable. But, according to the fashion of the country, I danced in the position which would be in Europe assigned to the lady; and very much easier and more agreeable I found the proceeding.

But my happiness was suddenly checked by my observing the unhappy Rosedale, standing solitary and disconsolate, the picture of despair. I was touched to the heart, and immediately began to frame an excuse for quitting the side of the Princess and going to her. Her Royal Highness also noticed her, as we concluded the dance, and beckoning to an attendant gave her some order. The latter crossed over to Rosedale, and made a communication to her, the purport of which I could guess, for she bowed and quitted the hall, casting two most expressive glances as she retired; one at me full of anguish and regret, one at the Princess full of rage and revenge.

"Really, your Royal Highness," I said, "I am sincerely and profoundly grateful to you for your kindness, and I beg to assure you that I feel most extensively flattered by the honour you have done me, but I think it scarcely right that I should desert so abruptly the hostess who has treated me with so much generosity and consideration."

"She shall not lose by it," said the Princess. "After you left the dinner-table, I arranged a marriage for her with the richest ward in the care of the Lady Chamberlain; who is, I am told, as handsome as he is wealthy."

"But she may be indisposed for marriage," I urged timidly, recollecting that she had only been wedded to me before the registrar in the morning.

"If she is neither married nor disposed to marry at our royal command, she will evidently require to go through the tomb, to learn self-discipline," said the Princess sternly; adding, with a look at me which caused me to shudder and remain silent, "I scarcely think you will consider that her hospitality demands your accompanying her in that journey." The awful reflection that at any moment their silent system of education might be conceived requisite for my erring spirit effectually prevented my return to the topic. It occurred to me that I had better make the most of life, and bask in

the sunshine of royalty's smiles, as I was separated from the moonshine of sentiment. It was evident that petticoat government meant despotism. But I remembered that cruelty in the regions of romance had always been predicted of beauty, and I fully recognised the fact that tyranny was natural to the so-called softer sex.

With an affectation of gaiety I turned towards the Princess and succeeded, I believe, in effectually disabusing her mind of any notion that my feelings had been lacerated by the loss of Rosedale.

"I say," said the intrepid one, coming up to me when, a short time after, I was lounging at the door, and seeming a little daunted at last; "my lovely little Harebell has been ordered to leave the palace with Rosedale, and a lackadaisical but rather handsome girl, with an eyeglass, who was seated near the Princess at dinner, has been making up to me. She seems a great personage, but I don't care for her nearly so well as Harebell. She says that the Princess has ordered that we shall remain in the palace; at least so I understand from what little I know of their confounded lingo. But can't we cut it? What d'ye think, eh?"

"The Princess delicately hinted to me that if we didn't choose to accept her hospitalities we might ourselves afford banquets to the worms, so I think we had better stay."

"By jaspers!" exclaimed the aeronaut, "remain here—parted from our wives, just after marriage?"

"Better break our hearts than lose our heads, in my opinion. Well, such is life; here is demonstration of the fact that there may be misery in the gilded palace as well as the lowly cottage."

"I begin to wish we were up in the balloon again," said the aeronaut, "and out of this unnatural country."

"We must tell the Princess that we want to show her the balloon, and get her to send for it," I said: "we must hope it may serve us again."

* * * * *

That night on returning, we drew easy chairs on to the balcony upon which our windows opened, according to the usual plan in Juponian, and lighted our cheroots.

"Like the Doge's palace, this, palace and prison in one, it seems," O'Connor commenced.

"You are about right," I replied; "and to think that we were only married this morning, and our poor little wives separated from us for ever, maybe. I wonder what they are doing—crying their eyes out, I shouldn't wonder."

"Or drinking hard," heartlessly responded the aeronaut.

"But must we really commit bigamy in obedience to the royal

mandate? Yet if we confess our marriage we shall have most probably all to go through the tomb, so that I don't see that we are morally to blame if we do commit bigamy. It only shows what terrible despotism these women have founded."

We were thus moralising over our manillas when something in the gloaming, moving stealthily along, attracted my attention.

I at first supposed it to be a cat upon the palace garden wall; but as I gazed, unconsciously attracted, the appearance resolved itself into the similitude of a young and beautiful woman in a French bathing dress. There could be no doubt about it—my love and discerning eyes assured me that it was Rosedale. Love had evidently lent her "light wings to o'erperch" the wall, or else she had climbed over it by some less poetical method. She saw us on the balcony, and, waving her hand to us, jumped lightly to the ground, which was at no great distance on the garden side of the wall. Her place upon the wall was directly occupied by another feminine figure, which the enraptured eyes of my friend decided to be his Harebell.

"They've put a cushion on the wall to keep the broken bottles from hurting them," he cried, as he stared intently at the spot. "Clever girls!"

"Clever and affectionate girls," re-echoed I. But we now perceived that, although the part of the wall which they had just overcome was clearly revealed to us in the moonbeams, trees and shrubs concealed it from all the windows of the palace except our own, which were situated in a kind of projecting turret. As we afterwards knew, the exterior of that part was secluded by a grove, while the shadow of the moon had rendered the angle, against which they had erected a light ladder, more perfectly obscure. Other masses of foliage, again, curtained the place from the view of a sentry who was pacing the terrace walk, with her spear-head gleaming silver in the moonshine. But although its situation had been so far favourable to their enterprise, it nevertheless appeared that they were still almost hopelessly separated from us. In the first place our balcony was at some distance from the ground, and rendered further unapproachable by a deep area or fosse which seemed to surround the palace. In the second, they would have to traverse the open moonlighted space, in which they would be observed by the sentry to a certainty almost. But the clever darlings were equal to the emergency. They made signs to us that we should engage the sentry in conversation. She was a veteran of at least thirty-nine summers, but they must be veterans indeed who have shelved vanity and coquetry. Our compliments and smiles proved such an attraction for her that she had eyes only for us. Seizing this opportunity, Rosedale and Harebell shot like rockets across the open space, and before we could realise their

intentions a scarf had been stuffed into the sentry's mouth, her arms pinioned and her legs tied, and she was unceremoniously bundled into the area below—a sad example of the retribution which certainly overtakes those who in middle age abandon themselves to the delightful follies of youth.

“We now need fear no interruption,” was her first remark, then with a “Look out, catch,” she threw up a bundle of something to us, which the aeronaut dexterously caught. It was a rope-ladder.

It was only the work of a moment to affix the ladder. Fancy, reader, my feelings when I beheld the object of my adoration in an abbreviated garment, swaying to and fro, as she ascended the rope ladder. With a bright smile upon her brave face, the adventurous girl climbed round after round of the slender rope, till she triumphantly reached the balustrade, and leaning over I grasped her round the waist and lifted her into safety. Harebell followed, and O'Connor seemed in looking upon his beloved one in peril to have lost some of that intrepidity which would never have failed him in circumstances of danger merely affecting himself. He similarly facilitated the end of her climb; and too resonant osculations proclaimed our mutual joy, as lips met lips, and eyes with rapture read each other's constancy and devotion. At the same instant a loud knock was heard at the door, which we had locked, between our private apartments and an ante-room, and the voice of one of the men who were in attendance on us was heard to announce her Royal Highness the Princess Regnante.

“Good gracious,” exclaimed our lady-lovers, “if discovered here our heads are lost.”

“Fly!” I cried wildly, after the fashion of heroines in old-fashioned melodramas.

“Whither?” cried the distracted fair ones, scouring about the apartment till each made towards a door, half open, at the other end.

“Oh, not in there,” I cried; “those are our bedchambers.” The ladies paused, and in hesitating were lost.

At the command of their Princess, the stalwart though matronly male attendants, with ponderous blows, burst in the door, and the Princess entered with wrathful countenance.

“Ha! I expected as much. To prison—to the Bastille with them directly!”

Shuddering, the ill-fated girls were led away.

Our own position was embarrassing: we feared a similar fate, but it was the Princess's pleasure to view us in quite a different light.

“Pray excuse this unwarrantable liberty on the part of two of my unruly subjects. I fear your rest has been disturbed, but let me offer

you some refreshment, after the fright you must of necessity have experienced," she said courteously ; then throwing herself on one of the most luxuriant fauteuils, she called out for wine. Then, as if by magic, a costly banquet was before us, and the Princess and the young Duchess of Thistlebank, her favourite, endeavoured to console us, while the pretty pages were in attendance, and filled high the golden cups with sparkling wine.

But I seemed to see a sad scene in the magic mirror, as it were, of the rosy beverage. I saw our charming friends conducted down the dark and dismal stairs to the slimy dungeon beneath the moat. There were they shown mouldy straw for their beds, and hard crusts with a brown jug of brackish water for their supper. A few rays of ghostly moonshine struggling through the grated window only served to remind them of the bright outer world from which they had been so ruthlessly torn. I perceived, however, that our only hope of succouring them lay in dissembling. I nudged the aeronaut, and also winked at him, and we dissembled. After all, the supper was good, grills and devils of a very appetising character, and wines of rarest vintages. Conversation followed of a very agreeable turn, and the Princess Regnante left us in apparent satisfaction with our demeanour and information ; after hoping that we should feel at home in the palace, and assuring us that we should want for nothing.

After they had retired the aeronaut lighted his cheroot and remarked, "Faith, the supper wasn't bad, but it was confoundedly heartless to be gormandising and guzzling while those pretty friends of ours are the deuce knows in what abominable situation."

"It is most distressing, but it is evident that we are as much prisoners as they are except that our cage has gilded bars and is well supplied with seed and groundsel," I said, as I sorrowfully followed his example and lighted a pensive cheroot.

"But they have forgotten the rope-ladder," said O'Connor, going to the balcony and drawing it up.

"Britons never will be slaves," I said, "except to women who govern by their charms alone."

V.

THE REVOLUTION.—OUR ESCAPE.

THE events of the years 1789–1793 must have presented a succession of absolute surprises to the old French aristocracy. The events which I am about to narrate as having happened at this epoch in the Island of Jupon were probably equally astonishing to the autocratic females who had been retaining man in an unnatural condition of

petticoated subserviency. The French *noblesse* little imagined that it was even possible, much less probable, that the despised *canaille* should actually rise in insurrection, and destroy that very sacred majesty itself, upon which they conceived that the circles of political and social life as positively depended as a wheel upon its axis. The ladies of Jupon as little supposed the likelihood of the lazy males exhibiting a sudden accession of excitement, zeal, and fervour for liberty. But they might have observed, if they had not reposed so securely in the possession of their fancied rights, that the manly brain had been gradually fired to boiling heat. Dissatisfaction had been long felt, and had now grown to actual disposition to rebel.

Stimulated perhaps by the example of enterprise exhibited in our own arrival from the clouds, a society not altogether dissimilar in character to a trade's union had been formed amongst the men, and organisations effected to prepare for a strike if necessary. One evening, soon after the events related, we were startled by our stern-looking and usually uncommunicative attendants each placing his forefinger against the side of his nose, and exclaiming "Hush!" We simultaneously started, for the life we had been leading had shaken the nervous system of even the intrepid one. They then hurriedly told us a long story, to the effect that the men could endure their petticoats no longer, in fact that they wanted to cut them altogether, and, amongst other reforms, that they aimed at securing, in their own trousers' pockets, those purses which were now so complacently pocketed by the women. Gymnastic clubs had been distributed amongst the men, who had for some time been occupying their spare moments in strengthening their muscles. The women attached no more significance to this movement than we English to the spectacle of girls rowing on the Thames or taking to calisthenic exercises, rinking, or lawn tennis. If, continued our attendants, we would consent to remain quietly in the palace for some time longer, dissimulating and keeping the Princess and her favourite amused, the day would not be far distant when the men of Jupon would be ready to rise suddenly in open revolt. They then requested us to accept the posts of leaders, and afterwards assume the sovereignty of the realm. The aeronaut and I found our courage and energy returning as these encouraging resolutions were communicated.

So day rolled on after day, we had visits constantly from royalty, and it was pretty evident that the fair Princess was determined to make me hers.

But while we were thus basking in the sunshine of royalty, the pot was already boiling in which was speedily to be cooked the goose of female supremacy.

Secretly we were constantly descending our rope-ladder, to attend

the conferences of the insurrection. Our plan was that when the signal of the rising should be made, every man was to grasp the nearest woman by the waist, and while securely imprisoning her with his lately acquired strength, he was to smother her with kisses unless she consented on the spot to a revision of the constitution.

At length the momentous day arrived, the crisis was at hand—the storm lowered and the rising tide of oppressed males threatened to overwhelm the house of petticoat rule frailly raised on the sands of mistake. It was the Queen's birthday, when the Isle of Jupon, and especially the capital, gave itself up to festivity and frolic. In the morning there was a review of Amazons ; in the afternoon a garden party at the palace ; in the evening more festivities, a state banquet and a ball, and the entire illumination of the capital. Weapons of all sorts had been cast aside, and the whole town was *en carnival*. Not a sign of revolt was perceptible. But as the hour of twelve approached, the men no longer stood in little groups chatting and laughing, but somehow near every woman stood a man. It had been arranged by bribing all the musicians in the palace, and at lesser entertainments, that as the great clock of the city struck midnight, every band was to strike up a maddening waltz. The device answered admirably. As the solemn strokes pealed out the waltz commenced, and every man at once grasped the nearest woman round the waist, took one turn round the room, then folding her in his arms kissed her to submission.

Thus was the Revolution effected. A flourish of trumpets, followed by the simultaneous ascent of one thousand rockets, proclaimed the fact that I had the Princess Regnante in my arms. Everywhere the superior muscles of the men secured success. Here and there a few faces were torn by nails, or a few handfuls of hair were dragged out, but the victory was complete. The Princess accepted the position, and when in my arms I believe really liked it, and agreed to resign the throne to me on condition of my allowing her to share it with me—of course I mean the Regnancy, for the Queen was still alive. And now I was suddenly brought face to face with a difficulty, which I had almost forgotten in the flush of success, but which occasioned a poignancy of anguish which showed that my heart had never recovered the wound inflicted upon it. In fact, as the Princess hung upon my arm, watching without apparent regret the demolition of the odious prison, which was one of the earliest measures undertaken by the new government, a pale, dishevelled, damp, and even dirty-looking but still handsome object stood reproachfully before me. It was Rose-dale. The throne was mine, but the queen of my heart had not shared my elevation, but very much the contrary.

With similar expression, but more angry vehemence of gesture, Lady Pansy Harebell had presented herself to the aeronaut, who had

made a prize of the Duchess of Thistlebank at the same moment as I had overcome the Princess.

The intrepid one, equally with myself, was dismayed, and thought "how happy he could have been with either." However, he arose, balloon-like, superior to circumstances. He at once grasped the notion that he could not throw aside his rich capture in favour of a younger sister's portion. He coldly but affably inquired after her health, hoped that she had not suffered in spirits or constitution from her incarceration, and turned again to his Duchess.

As for myself, I felt my passion for Rosedale returning, but I resisted it by the stern aid of reason ; and I also calmly asked after her health, expressed my regrets for the inconvenience to which she had been subjected, pleaded State business as an excuse, and retired with my Princess. But I confess that I writhed under the curls of scorn which I saw upon her lip as I turned from her ; while the tears, half of sorrow, half of indignation, which glistened in her eyes almost melted me. However, sufficient of the ice of self-interest abided in my heart ; but I felt that I had commenced my career as a monarch (limited) by being despised or hated. But one must rise in the world by trampling upon somebody. And it might be considered that I had acted nobly in sacrificing my personal feelings on the altar of duty. In fact there are at least two points of view from which every question may be regarded ; and the longer I reflected the stronger became my convictions that I was a hero rather than a scoundrel.

And now began my reign, for the old Queen abdicated, and the Princess and I were crowned in solemn state in the chief temple of the realm.

I at once played popular monarch, and soon discovered the truth of our wonderful Shakespeare's remark, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Not that I slept so badly when between the sheets, but late to bed and early to rise had to become my motto ; and when up I scarcely knew a moment's peace. The aeronaut, in his combined bureaux of Premier, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Board of Works, in fact, as my Liberal Administration, became more enthusiastic every moment, and reminded me of nothing so much as his own balloon, except that he seemed likely to go down rather than up in the air of popular estimation. His vagaries occasioned me much anxiety, though his superior acquaintance with astronomy and other branches of knowledge, which had nothing whatever to do with statesmanship, still caused many people to believe in him ; especially those that arrogated to themselves the appellation of advanced thinkers, and considered themselves altogether cleverer than their neighbours. Between councils and levees, banquets and balls, inaugurations and

ceremonials of every conceivable kind, I found that I earned my salary as sovereign very conscientiously. But certainly I had entirely got rid of ennui. I was no longer "used up"; indeed, I had not time to think whether I was enjoying life or not, but, in looking back upon that period of my existence, I appreciate the truth of the observation that we do not know when we are happy.

Now the Parliament of Jupon—which consisted of a House of Peeresses only, for the women had been far too conservative ever to dream of a popular assembly—had occupied itself principally in debating matters of fashion. It exercised so little influence upon the actual government of the land that it had not been thought requisite to dissolve it, and the ladies still continued to chatter interminably on these topics. But it occurred to my friend, rendered more soaring than ever by the popular acclamations which had accompanied him, that he could strengthen himself in his flights of genius by a dissolution and substitution of a male Parliament. I was averse to the plan myself, but he was not to be deterred, and, recollecting Cromwell, he strutted into the House one day and ordered his ironhearts, as the women had nicknamed our male bodyguard, to take away that bauble, pointing to a parasol, gorgeous as the King of Ashantee's umbrella, which was elevated over the president's head. But a Parliament of women was not to be dissolved so easily. A fearful clamour of angry and excited voices arose, and finally the peeresses left the Chamber, dissolved only in tears. Their husbands, proud of their new responsibilities, hurried to console and protect them; and a national party was formed which had its headquarters in the salon of Lady Rosedale, with the intention of sending me and the aeronaut through the tomb, to learn discretion if possible.

Although the calisthenic clubs had imparted a certain amount of vigour to the muscles of the men, and enabled them to secure a physical victory over the women, it was not so easy to restore strength to their enervated minds. The disarmed women took refuge in the weapons which we Europeans consider more becoming to their sex; and by smiles and tears, pretty chaff and pensive entreaty, speedily regained much of the power of which they had been deprived. Conspiracies, cabals, and the common contumacy of an unsettled population rendered government impossible, the throne a seat of thorns, and the Administrative Board a plank of nails. I summoned a House of Peers and issued writs for the election of a House of Commons; but women on platforms throughout the realm declaimed against the indecency of the new fashions in male attire, and protested against the attempts of the reforming party to lengthen feminine skirts. And, when politically excited, the inhabitants of this remarkable country could not, like the English, restrain their political enthusiasm

within the bounds of throwing brickbats at people's heads or breaking windows. Civil war was proclaimed, and I found myself compelled to embody an army of the enfranchised males to contest the sovereignty against an array of Amazons, commanded by the gallant Rosedale. I could not endure the thought of injuring the graceful figures of the women, and, relying on my old tactics, I gave orders to my men to bring them instantly to an engagement at close quarters, and hug them like bears.

Commencing with a shower of Greek fire, which was alarming rather than actually dangerous, accompanied with the fiercest glances, of the effect of which upon the hearts of my men I did entertain considerable apprehension, the fair enemy charged as ruthlessly as if they had been behind the counters of a fancy fair. Receiving the points of the feminine spears on their shields, my army closely followed my instructions, and again secured a temporary victory ; but at the cost of their generals, the intrepid aeronaut and myself. Brought up under so different a system of education, accustomed from youth upwards to regard ourselves as the social, though not political, slaves of woman-kind, we both fell before the angry looks of Rosedale and Harebell.

Instead of attempting to embrace them, we timorously dropped upon our knees and begged for mercy ; even the intrepid one having been struck down by the lightnings which flashed from the eyes of his enraged lady-love. Seeing us thus captivated, our soldiers released their prisoners, in their turns besought compassion, and received it on condition of acknowledging themselves conquered. In fact a coalition was formed between the sexes, on something like the old terms ; and Rosedale and Harebell were clamorously proclaimed their leaders. And these peerless beauties subsequently became such popular favourites that I could only compare their position to that enjoyed in England by our charming princesses. But their indignation had not been softened by our submission. Cruel as ever, the unanimous voice of the feminine population applauded Rosedale and Harebell in condemning the aeronaut and myself to have our perfidious hearts torn from our bodies, previously to our being bound to our balloon and sent upwards into space ; like too Mazeppas on an unbridled Pegasus. In vain we pleaded to the obdurate girls that they had already deprived us of our hearts, that we had been only momentarily seduced from their sides by the glittering baits of ambition, and that we had been ever constant in reality. They simply said that they did not believe us, and that justice demanded that the heaviest penalties should be inflicted upon us from bigamous relations with the Princess Regnante and the Duchess of Thistlebank.

I should here mention that upon receiving information of our incarceration the Princess had fled to the brother island, attended by

the Duchess, and had there received the homage of the people, as rightful possessor of the throne.

Meanwhile the cowed one and I watched in trembling anxiety the inflating of the balloon from the narrow casement of our prison, and awaited in cold horror the agonies of the moment when our bleeding hearts would be torn for ever from us—hearts which had really always beaten with the utmost reverence, as well as affection, for woman. Yet we were both sorrowfully compelled to confess to ourselves, upon consideration, that our inconstancy had deserved the punishment. Still we could not quite resign ourselves to circumstances, and I bitterly bewailed the day when idleness and ennui had conspired to tempt me into a balloon at Cremorne.

But assistance came from the quarter in which we least expected or deserved it. Rosedale and Harebell appeared, and with tears informed us that they could not stem the tide of popular wrath, that all the women in Jupon insisted upon having our hearts, but that they themselves would resign everything for our sakes if we would but take them with us up in our balloon. Pressing the lovely amiable beings to our hearts, we stealthily sought the courtyard of the palace, in which the inflated balloon wobbled gently to and fro in the light evening breeze. In another moment we had embarked, the cord was cut, and we were rising to the stars gazing with varying emotions down on the lime-lit city beneath us.

Suddenly our balloon, rising, was caught by a more vigorous stratum of air, and we were whirled away till the brilliant city appeared but as a star in the firmament.

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Rat-a-tat-tat! Rat-a-tat-tat-tat!! “Hot water, sir, it’s past eight o’clock!” “Hot water. . . . Balloon! Rosedale! Psha! how ridiculous! Why, of course it’s all a dream,” I ejaculated, as my eye fell on an empty chloral bottle and a volume of Stuart Mill by my bedside.



The New Endymion.

By JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

I.

THE term was over, and William Maybold had got his double first.

Under certain circumstances, and especially in youth, the mind becomes abnormally sensitive to impressions of all kinds. Severe and long-continued study, a light diet, lack of exercise, and a superfluity of anxiety, had combined to bring my mental man into a condition somewhat resembling the ascetic ecstasy ascribed to the monks of old time—a condition in which the young men see visions and the old men dream dreams. In other words, I had overworked myself, and my health, never very robust, now seemed to run some risk of breaking down altogether. My brain was in a state of nervous exaltation; my hands were thin and tremulous; my nights were disturbed by strange dreams, and even by occasional somnambulism; and I no longer felt energy to undertake the long walks which had been my panacea for bodily ailments. It seemed likely that my university honours might turn out to have been bought at too high a price.

My doctor, having felt my pulse, furnished me with the somewhat gratuitous information that what I needed was rest—rest absolute and persistent, bodily and mental: to dream beneath green trees; to linger by still waters; to forget that such things as books and knowledge existed; to think of nothing, and converse with nobody more stimulating than birds, beasts, country yokels, and speckled trout. Anything in the shape of newspapers, railways, days of the week or month, or, in fact, of time and civilisation in general, were to be entirely ignored. I was to establish a sort of rural eternity for myself, and to forget that such a thing as a nineteenth century had ever been born.

I was wholly persuaded of the soundness of this advice; the trouble was, I had not “go” enough left in me to follow it. I wanted somebody to give me a shove in the required direction. Unfortunately, I was almost alone in the world, and could think of no quarter whence the external impetus might be expected. I had made few intimate friends in the university, and none of a temperament at once idle and energetic enough to provide the sort of companionship I needed. I was an only child, and my widowed mother had died about a year previous, leaving me an empty house somewhere in the suburbs of

London, a comfortable competence, and no relations that I could remember ever to have seen. I was as solitary in the midst of the populous earth as if I had changed places with the man in the moon.

I was doing my situation less than justice, however. Just as I had begun to subside into I know not what sluggish depths of despondency, I received a letter which put a new face upon matters, and lent a jillip to my jaded mood, such as awakened me to something like liveliness. The letter was from an uncle of mine, whose very existence had been almost mythical to me, for he was a recluse and an eccentric, who never went anywhere, and lived in an out-of-the-way place, where nobody ever went. As his communication was brief and to the point, I will give it here at full length :

“DEAR NEPHEW,—If your studies have left you brains enough to apprehend the vanity of double firsts and their consequences, come to me and let me look at you. If I like your looks you may stay here a month or two. You will see the country, Diana, and the stars; you will hear the winds, the birds, and the brook; and of the world you have hitherto lived in you will see and hear nothing. I shall expect you the day after to-morrow.—
Your uncle, “PHILIP NORMAN.”

I allowed myself no doubts as to this invitation, but wrote an acceptance by return of post. The rest of the day was spent in packing my trunk and making arrangements for my absence. It was only on the evening preceding departure, when all preparations were complete, that I found time to sit down and recall what little I knew of my uncle Philip, and to forecast the kind of life I might expect with him. He was my mother's brother, and I remembered hearing that he had quarrelled with her on the occasion of her marriage, some twenty-five years ago. Later on, he had himself married, but his wife had died in childbirth within the year, leaving him with an infant daughter—presumably the Diana referred to in his letter. But “Diana—and the stars”—what was the meaning of that? Was my worthy relative a dabbler in astrology—a devotee of forbidden sciences? The idea moved me strangely. I had always been an imaginative youth, and nothing had stimulated the boyish poetry of my nature so much as the beauty and mystery of the heavenly bodies. I loved to speculate as to whether they were inhabited, and, if so, by what sort of beings: I loved to believe that they exercised some inscrutable influence over human destinies; that, at all events, the fortunes of our earth were connected with them in some manner whereof the attraction of gravitation was but the material symbol. Such speculations used to inspire me with a feeling at once of insignificance and of exaltation; and I deemed that my life could not be

spent more wisely and worthily than in pondering over these secrets of the stars, and striving to solve the problem of their affinity with man. As I grew up, however, the course of my education drew me away from the region of these fancies; not without a vague sentiment of disappointment, I learned to open the gates of practical knowledge with the key of inductive reasoning; and the mystic enchantment of those heavenly suns and planets was half destroyed by the rude facts of spectrum analysis, and the ingenious calculations of distances, orbits, and dimensions. Astronomy, with its certainties and its syllogisms, repelled me: it revealed too much, and yet nothing to my purpose. I hated the impertinence of him who would tell me the density of Jupiter, the composition of Sirius, and the names of the mountains in the moon. To my sense, such petty knowledge was worse than no knowledge at all, and I was shocked by the self-complacent irreverence of its professors. Better, thought I, than these were the astrologers of yore, with their statistical ignorance, their spiritual insight, and their humble faith. They, at least, appreciated the awful solemnity that should attend the thought of other worlds, material, perhaps, as our own, yet for ever separated from us by a chasm as profound and as mysterious as death. Away with the modern man of science, ready primed with his dapper theories, who cares not to meditate upon the divine reason which placed that eternal gulf between the moon and us, but fancies he has disposed of the whole matter by informing us just how many miles and furlongs it measures across! Can he learn no loftier lesson from the ghastly majesty of that weird sphere?

With such prejudices against astronomy as distinguished from astrology, it is no wonder that I shunned the former as much as possible, both at school and at college. Though I could not avoid acquiring a certain familiarity with the phraseology and the general principles of the science, what I learned took no root in my mind, but remained lifeless and barren. It was my intention to improve the earliest opportunity of clearing it out altogether, and then to endeavour to regain, so far as might be possible, the poetical superstitions of my earlier time. Deliberate recantations of this kind are not, however, so practical as we fain would have them, and, until I read that chance sentence about the stars in my uncle's letter, I had really bestowed little or no serious consideration upon the matter. But his words, and the memories and reflections to which they gave rise, produced in me a singular excitement, which my abnormal state of health doubtless did much to foster. My sleep that night was more than usually disturbed, and when, the next day, I started for my uncle's house, I was in a tremor of indefinite expectation that was anything but healthful.

II.

The railway station at which I alighted was, the porter told me, about seven miles distant from Mr. Norman's place. This information rather staggered me, as there were no cabs in that part of the world, and walking, for one in my state of health, was quite out of the question. Just then, however, a country waggon drove up to the station door, with a stout, serviceable bay mare between the shafts. The elderly farmer who handled the reins threw them on the mare's back, and, clambering to the ground, faced about and abruptly asked me whether I were William Maybold.

"Yes," I said, amused at his rustic bluntness; "were you sent here by Mr. Philip Norman?"

"I'm to drive you to his house," replied the man, gruffly. "Get up, sir. Got any luggage?"

"Only that trunk; can you lift it?"

I needed scarcely have asked the question. My farmer, though not of any great height, was as broad and muscular as an old Roman gladiator, and he swung the trunk into the back of the waggon as easily as if it had been a lady's handbox. He was in every respect a fine type of the men of that region. His face was dark, and ruggedly moulded, and the deep lines which traversed it gave it an expression of sternness, which the gruffness of his tones in speaking seemed to confirm. His grizzled black hair was cropped short round the lower part of his head; the crown—as I noticed when he took off his hat to wipe his forehead—was bald; and he wore a great shaggy beard like a prophet. But the remarkable features of his face were his eyes, which were large and dark, and had the steady, distant look in them that is often observable in the eyes of seafaring men. They seemed to have beheld sights beyond ordinary human ken.

"I suppose you know Mr. Norman?" I said to my companion as we drove away.

"Yes; I have charge of his garden."

"He sees very little of the world, I believe?"

"There are more worlds than one, young man."

As I did not know exactly what to make of this reply, I was silent, and gave my attention to the country through which we were passing. It was fertile, and rich in verdure, but the houses were very scarce. The road we were travelling wound considerably, but constantly ascended, and bade fair to land us at last on the summit of a commanding eminence. The prospect constantly widened around us as we proceeded, and its beauty, as it reposed in the mellow splendour of the afternoon sunshine, so wrought upon me that at length I let slip some exclamation of delight.

"Can a Cockney care for this?" demanded the farmer, fixing his eyes upon me for a moment.

"I'm not infatuated with London," I answered, laughing. "I've travelled farther away from it than this, before now."

"Ay, London's not the world, young man, and the world is not the universe," rejoined my companion, whom I now began to recognise as a "character." After a pause, he added, "Have you seen the Alps?"

"More than once."

"What did they make you feel?"

"I think their loveliness and silence impressed me most. I felt that they were very mighty, and I very little."

For what reason I could not imagine, this answer appeared to please the dark-browed farmer. He nodded his head once or twice, and murmured in a deep, inward voice, "Ay—right—right! But there are mountains wilder, and mightier, and lonelier than they."

"You are a traveller yourself, then?" I exclaimed, surveying him with a new interest. "You have been a sailor, perhaps?"

"I have sailed a wide ocean and a deep one; and I have seen distant lands; yet I have never set foot off the shore of England," was the reply.

Again I was silenced. There was something decidedly mysterious in the tone of this man's conversation. What did he mean by his talk of other worlds, and of visiting foreign countries without leaving his own? I should have set him down as perhaps a little wrong in the head, had not the stern self-possession and utter absence of extravagance in his manner discountenanced such a supposition. On the other hand, he was manifestly a man of some education and even refinement. His dress was rude enough, but his speech was accurate, and his face, despite its ruggedness, was sensitive to the play of thought within. It occurred to me that he might be a spiritualist, and that the strange lands to which he alluded might be the visions of mesmeric trance. Yet no; there was in him no trace of the morbid and unwholesome restlessness of the confirmed disciples of that unclean science. What, then, was he?

I looked round at him as I asked this question of myself, and met those far-seeing eyes of his directed upon me with something like a grave smile lurking at their bottom. This smile quite changed the impression of his visage, illumining it with a genial light that was singularly winning. It brought a sudden memory to my mind.

"You take me for a lunatic, young man," said he; "well, in a certain way, perhaps I am one. You must ask your uncle."

"I dare say he could tell me as much about you as any one," I replied, returning his smile; "for I believe you are my uncle, yourself!"

"What makes you think that?"

"You smile as my mother used to do."

At the mention of my mother his face saddened again, and he sighed; but after a moment, "Well, my boy, you have found me out," he said, patting me kindly on the shoulder. "I wished to meet you as a man before I greeted you as a nephew. You seem to be an honest fellow, though you have but a flimsy body to carry your honesty about with. I am glad to see you here."

There was so much quiet heartiness in this welcome, that I felt at home with my relative at once. He now talked with me more freely, asking many particulars about my mother and myself, and indulging in no more of those enigmatical utterances which had made him seem so questionable at first. In this manner we slowly wound our way to the top of the long acclivity, and, after driving a level mile or so, I saw the summit of a lofty stone tower peering above the trees.

"That is my travelling-carriage," said Uncle Philip, pointing to the tower with his whip. "The house stands beside it; we shall see it when we have turned that corner."

"His travelling-carriage!" thought I. But reflecting that all these enigmas could not fail to explain themselves under the influence of my month's sojourn, I held my peace for the present; and in another minute we had come in full view of the dwelling. It adjoined the tower, and, like it, was built of grey stone. It was an old farmhouse, of no great size, with a red-tiled roof and gabled ends; a clustered brick chimney divided the ridge-pole, and two dormer-windows pushed themselves up above the low eaves. The windows beneath were cut down to the ground, and served as supplementary doors: they opened vertically, and from within was a glimpse of pleasant, low-ceiled rooms. As for the tower, which was half drooped with ivy, it was evidently a much more ancient structure than the house; it must have been at least seventy feet in height, and its top rose well above the trees; and standing as it did on the highest point of ground for many a mile round about, it would overlook an amazing expanse of country.

"You are very near the moon, up there!" I remarked; and then caught sight of a figure standing in the open doorway which immediately commanded every faculty of my mind to the one function of looking.

III.

The waggon drew up at the door. "Jump down, sir," said my uncle. "Diana," he continued, "this is your cousin William. I think you may trust him."

She came forward and gave me her hand—it was soft, and smooth, and slender. She conquered me with the first glance of her great hazel eyes. Her whole figure and bearing were goddess-like, and withal completely feminine. She was well-named after the chaste huntress of mythology. I never saw a woman's form at once so stately, so supple, and so refined.

Her pale auburn hair was massed over her low forehead like the crescent moon. Her nose was straight and delicate, her cheeks oval, her mouth curved like a bow, her chin round and white. She was dressed in white, with a black bow at her throat, and a black sash round her waist; and a black velvet ribbon bound her hair. She was tall, but not too tall; and the lines of her figure were at once graceful and severe. She would have impressed me at any time and in any place; but in this secluded spot, and in my condition of peculiar sensitiveness, she came upon me almost like a being from a superior world. The ordinary daylight seemed too rude and familiar for her. She should have dwelt, methought, under the mystic influences of the moon; the original reserve and innocent dignity of her demeanour were somehow suggestive of the pure cold glamour of that strange companion of our earth.

While her father took the waggon round to the stable, she led me within doors, and made me sit down in the pleasant little parlour. It was full of the odour of flowers.

"You look tired, Cousin Will," said she. "It is a long way from London here."

"It seems so, indeed. If I had journeyed to another planet, all this could not seem more fresh and delightful. Have you ever been there?"

"In London? Oh no, why should I? I was born here, and this is my home."

True enough, London, with its smoke and turmoil, was no place for this young sybil. Her beautiful feet were made to tread nothing lower than mountain-tops. I asked her whether many people visited them here.

"Last year we saw a great many—twelve, I believe," she answered quite simply, as if the population of the earth were but a small multiple of that number. "But they were all scientific persons, who came to find out about our discoveries. You are not scientific?"

"No, indeed! I am nothing—only a young man."

"You are the first young man I have seen."

"I wish I were a better specimen!" I said, rather ruefully. "They are not all like me, I assure you!"

She turned upon me the full gaze of her changing eyes, and I felt that she was looking very far into me. After a pause she said

thoughtfully, "It is strange! You look a little—yes, a great deal—like . . . Are you like your mother?"

"I believe more like my father."

She shook her head, still thoughtfully. Then, rousing herself, she said with a smile, "You look pale and tired; but that we shall cure you of."

"Why, I begin to feel cured already what with this pure air and—and all! But tell me, Cousin Diana, what are these discoveries you speak of?"

At this question her face became quite grave again, and she answered with a somewhat altered manner, and a lower intonation, as though touching upon a subject invested with a kind of sacredness.

"We do not speak of it to strangers—that is, we never speak of it. But you are not a stranger: and father said I might trust you: and—I think I may! Well, you shall know in good time."

At this juncture my uncle came in.

"Now, nephew, your room is ready for you. You and Diana have had time enough to become good cousins, I hope? Very well—come up and get ready for dinner. This way!"

He conducted me along a passage to a narrow door, on opening which a winding staircase was discovered. Ascending this—a somewhat weary journey for me—my uncle paused on the third landing and ushered me into a nearly circular room, fitted and furnished with dark carved wood. Two or three dusky oil-portraits hung on the walls—which last, judging from the deep embrasures of the windows, must have been of extraordinary thickness; and the massive groined ceiling seemed designed to support a vast superincumbent weight.

"This is the lower chamber," observed my uncle. "As long as you stay with us it will be yours."

"I'm not turning you out of your travelling-carriage, Uncle Philip?"

"That's overhead," he answered, with a smile. "After dinner, if the evening turns out clear, you may go up there, and try a little excursion."

A light began to dawn upon my slow wits.

"It is an observatory!" I exclaimed. "You are an astronomer?"

"Yes and no. I have been an astronomer, but only as a necessary condition to being something higher than that. But I gave it up, for the most part, years ago: I found myself growing old—my mind losing its delicacy of perception. Diana is the master now: and she—if she chooses—may indoctrinate in the mysteries." And nodding kindly to me, he shut the door and was gone.

He had not left me without food for reflection. I now understood—or at all events the key to—all that had puzzled me from the time

I received his note of invitation down to the present hour. "Diana and the stars" were to be my entertainment here: well—nothing, certainly, could so well have suited my own inclinations. The law of the heavens, followed in such companionship, would be heavenly law indeed! My aversion from astronomy now appeared to me unreasonable; or, rather, my uncle's words had enabled me to assign to astronomy its true place—that of an instrument to the study of "something higher." And Diana was the master—of this loftier science, that is. It was not likely, indeed, that my beautiful cousin would be content to spend her time in the pursuit of any technical details; but, on the other hand, who was so fitted as she to enjoy a sort of vicarious existence among those far-shining planets, divining their strange secrets, and catching the aroma of their marvellous life? These, then, were the journeys to which my uncle had figuratively alluded; the seas that he had crossed were the profound abysses of space, and the foreign countries that he had visited were foreign in the largest sense. The longer I reflected upon the romantic conditions of this father and daughter's life, the more powerfully did it seize on my imagination; I seemed to have a glimpse of possibilities beyond what had hitherto been deemed the limits of human attainment; the thought of what they had perhaps dared to know made my hand tremble and my breath come short. That discovery that Diana had mentioned—was it not some device whereby the magnifying power of the telescope had been vastly increased, enabling the student to behold sights such as man had scarcely as yet dreamed of? Oh, in that stone-built chariot of theirs, fast-bound to the whirling earth, what ineffable mysteries might not Philip Norman and Diana have explored! And now—was I to be admitted the companion of their sublime voyages?

To calm my excitement, I threw open the window, and, leaning upon the broad window-sill, looked out. The sun, swathed in clouds of golden dust, was just about to vanish behind the mighty shoulder of the glowing world. Beneath me stretched a wide and fertile plain, broken by hills, variegated with woods and fields, and dotted here and there with towns and hamlets. All the happiness and homely prosperity of human lives were there, at home in the bosom of benevolent nature, busied with lowly cares, ignorant and careless of aught beyond the familiar earth on which they were born, which yielded them food and raiment, and which at death resolved their mortal parts into itself again. Beautiful and peaceful was the prospect to look upon; beautiful and peaceful might be the lot of him who should cast his lines in those pleasant places, nor ever vex his soul with loftier things. And I myself, not longer ago than yesterday, would have been well content to settle down in some such fruitful valley, basking

in the sunshine by day, sleeping dreamlessly by night, and not at any time caring to lift my eyes above the horizon rim. But that yesterday was gone for ever. To-day, in the stone chamber overhead, hung poised, I knew, the wondrous engine framed to overcome all space. What interest had this earth compared to the sights that piercing crystal eye had looked upon? Penetrating by its aid into the depths of the universe, the spirit would breathe a finer air and rise to grander heights than any known to earthly experience. Already I felt myself impatient of my corporeal trammels, and longed to push aside the veil that separated me from those far-off worlds. And now, happening to glance eastwards, I saw, pallid amidst the darkening blue, the great white moon stealing upwards like a ghost, solitary, silent, and inscrutable !

IV.

A hand laid upon my shoulder caused me to start nervously. I turned, and met the grave dark eyes of my uncle Philip.

"What are you dreaming about, young fellow?" said he. "How pale and nervous you are ! We shall have to put you on a strict regimen, I see : early hours and plenty of milk to drink. Come, let's see what sort of an appetite you can show !"

"Would not you feel rather at a loss, Uncle Philip, if the moon were to drop out of the sky some day?"

"I see your mind is running on the observatory," he returned, with his short deep laugh. "Ask Diana ! She knows more about the moon than I do—or than any one else does, for that matter."

The conversation at dinner was not, however, much more transcendental than is customary on such occasions in England. Diana said but little ; and her father and I kept our feet pretty constantly on terra firma ; soaring but rarely beyond the attraction of gravity. The two things which chiefly affected me were, the luminous grace of my cousin's face and figure, and the airy potency of the wine, which was unlike anything I had heretofore tasted. It glowed like the warmth of a better life within my veins, and, while seeming to brace and clear my perceptive faculties, it stimulated and encouraged the poetical side of my nature. I felt, under these combined influences, as if my soul were obtaining a delightful mastery over my body. I noticed meanwhile, not without surprise, that although Diana vouchsafed to join me in more than one glass of this exquisite beverage, her father never touched it, but confined himself instead to a bottle of doubtless excellent burgundy.

"No," he said, in answer to my remark, "no, it is many years since I have drunk that wine. It is the wine of youth ; and, for

genuine youth, it possesses precious properties. Old age, whether premature or natural, finds it insipid and ineffective stuff enough. To its full enjoyment, a tender and sensitive texture of both mind and body are indispensable."

"You are the first man who has cared to drink it," observed Diana. "Generally, I have it all to myself!"

"How can any one who has once tasted it care for other wine?" I exclaimed. "It inspires one like beautiful music."

"Your appreciation compliments you, nephew," my uncle said. "Most young fellows of your years would prefer a glass of brandy-and-water to a whole hogshead of that liquor. Among its other merits, therefore, it acts as a test of character."

"How did you come by it?"

"'Tis of a very ancient vintage," he replied, "and I believe every bottle of it now extant is in my cellar. It was grown in a famous comet year, and under favourable aspects of the heavenly bodies. I can remember when I used to find it an agreeable tippie, previous to taking an observation. It has—for those who can drink it—the rare quality of brightening the faculties without afterwards reacting upon them. A child could use it without injury."

I looked at Diana, curious as to whether she had been brought up on this marvellous elixir; but, as if she had divined what was in my mind, and preferred to remain unquestioned, she arose at this point and went out, leaving her father and me to our decanters.

"You are fortunate in having made such good friends with your cousin," he remarked. "You are about the first man, except myself, to whom I have ever heard her volunteer an observation. Yea and nay is the sum of her speech to most of the inhabitants of this planet."

"She is certainly not talkative," said I, disguising the pleasure I felt at discovering that I had found favour in her sight. "You see very little company, I believe?"

"Well, I don't seek men much, and they find little encouragement in seeking me," returned my uncle, taking a draught of burgundy, and fixing his dark eyes upon me. "We do not sympathise with their aims, nor they with ours. And yet, nephew, I sometimes wish that Diana could see the world. She has strange fancies: perhaps I have no right to call them mere fancies, either!"

He stopped abruptly: I was silent: presently he resumed again.

"I have tried to follow her in those strange flights of hers; if I were her own age, perhaps I might follow her after a fashion; but women are mysterious to men, especially young women like Diana—innocent as a flower, and fathomless as the ether. She is alone, quite

alone, as far as human companionship goes. Ay, it might be well for her to see the world, were that possible, without the world's seeing her! I tell you, I sometimes fear the effect of this solitary life upon her—upon a girl with such a mind and heart. Heaven knows—I dare not ask—what unearthly friends she may hold communion with, up yonder in her tower!”

“I can imagine no communion so fitting for her as that of the stars,” said I.

“She was born to those studies, and has grown up in them: and she has divined secrets which no other human being has attempted. When she was born, I was full of the faith and eagerness of youth; and Diana, even as a child, showed traces of the influences that were uppermost with me. He who would fathom the stars, nephew, must needs be reverent, humble, and of a willing mind: they will not reveal themselves to self-conceit and prejudice. Age has stiffened my mental movements; the epoch of my deepest insight is gone, long since! Some rays of the great light once shone upon me; but they have faded—faded! Diana inherits all, and has made it more. Why, she is more at home among the craters of the moon than in her own boudoir!” and with this my uncle laughed again.

“She is the new daughter of the old astrology!” said I.

“Astrology? humph!” said my uncle. “Mediæval astrology was crippled by religious superstition and intellectual darkness. But there was, no doubt, in prehistoric ages, an ancient race of men who had a profounder knowledge of this subject than modern minds are apt to imagine. From that primitive wisdom the science of ancient Egypt was a derivation—one of great subtlety and ingenuity, but lacking the celestial light of the earlier men. And the Egyptians, in turn, furnished the stock-in-trade upon which is founded the lore of our later Nostradamuses.”

“And is there truth in horoscopes and nativities?”

“They are but a paltry matter after all. There is better wisdom in the stars than that. The universe is human nature writ large; and he who learns to spell the least word of that great page will never afterwards condescend to work out horoscopes with compasses and logarithms. No: in those worlds yonder,” said my uncle, rising and sauntering towards the open window, “live human races in every conceivable degree of development. Ay, think of that!”

“And is there most wickedness or goodness there?”

“They shine fair enough, don't they?” answered my uncle, after a short silence; “but all their light cannot elucidate that question. You must ask your own heart; the elements of the solution are there.”

V.

It was a warm clear night, and we sat out on the balcony for an hour, smoking my uncle's excellent cigars, and sipping coffee; but our conversation died away as the shadows deepened, and for a long time no word passed between us. At length a lamp was lighted in the room—a great moonlike globe of creamy glass, which contended in its homely way with the calm lustre of the great satellite that now stood high above us in the dark immutable ether. A figure was moving slowly to and fro within, which I knew, without directly looking at it, was Diana's. By-and-by she came to the window, and stood there between the lamplight and the moonlight, looking up.

“Which does she belong to?” I murmured to my uncle.

He understood me, and answered with a smile, “The man in the moon has had it all his own way thus far; but now I shall take it kindly if you set up a wholesome rivalry with him!—Come in, nephew: I feel the dew.—Diana, will you give us some music?”

She took a violin from a small table in the corner, and, sitting down where the moonlight fell into the room, she fixed her eyes dreamily upon the cold planet, and began to play. The violin, when skilfully touched, has always affected me more than any other instrument, and I had never been in so susceptible a mood as I was to-night. But ah! what music was that—so strange, so sweet, so wild! Wild it was as the far-off howling of wolves, when the moon shines upon snow-covered prairies; but organised, proportioned, and enriched by the subtle intelligence of a human musician's brain. It stirred my blood with aerie thrills; the homelike room in which I sate grew indistinct and vanished. I was alone with Diana and the music—and where were we? Not on earth, surely—not in any region where men and women ever lived and breathed. My eyes followed hers towards the moon; the white rays touched my heart and spirit, and mystically waved me thither. Slowly the burnished disc waxed larger and brighter: the fairy melody of the violin sounded keener and intenser in my ears: in the rarefied atmosphere I almost ceased to breathe: Diana was before me, but she too seemed fading out of sight: if I lost her, I should be alone in the bottomless void of space. The vibration of the strings died away. . . .

“Drink this,” said my uncle's deep but kindly voice. “That's it! You were within an ace of fainting dead away, my dear boy. You must be more exhausted by your journey than I thought. Hadn't you better turn in for the night?”

“It's nothing!—only a sort of—of momentary drowsiness that sometimes comes over me,” I replied, greatly mortified at such a display of my feebleness. “I shall be all the better for it presently.

As for turning in, I can't think of doing that before I've been up to see the telescope!" In saying this, I turned and met the glance of my cousin Diana. I thought—it may have been only a fancy—that she looked upon me with much more tenderness and interest than she had done heretofore. She bent down towards me, resting her beautiful hand on the arm of the sofa, close to my shoulder.

"You shall see it," she said, in a tone so sweet and gentle that it brought the blood to my cheeks: to see her so near me made me feel warm and happy. "You shall see what no one else has seen. But not to-night!"

"Oh, why not to-night?"

"You need strength to look at what I have to show."

"I am not so good-for-nothing as I seem—indeed I'm not!"

"Father, do you think it would be safe?" said she, turning towards my dark-browed uncle, who was standing aside, with his arms folded, thoughtfully gazing at the lamp.

"Eh?—safe?—why not?" returned he, rousing himself from his reverie. "A peep through a telescope ought not to upset a young fellow who has seen Europe, and got a double first! Besides, my dear, you mustn't expect that he will see as much as you can!—well, at all events, you can let him see the observatory and the arrangements, and then, if it seem advisable to put off the rest till another evening, why, so be it!"

Diana stood silent a few moments, with her head lifted, in an attitude common with her, looking out into the night. Then she moved towards her father with a slow, sauntering, royal step—no other woman ever trod as she did—and, placing her hand within his arm, drew him to the window. They had some conversation together in an undertone; I did not willingly listen to it, and I cannot even be sure that what I heard was not—in part at least—the creation of my own fancy. But my invalid condition had made my hearing, as well as my other senses, preternaturally acute, and the conversation seemed to me to run somewhat thus:

"Did you see his face, as he lay there?" Diana had asked.

"Yes, my dear; a good-looking set of features enough: what then?"

"Don't jest about it, father."

"Well, well, my dear, I see what you are driving at. Yes, there is a resemblance, certainly; I noticed it from the first; but it might occur in a dozen or twenty instances beside this one. There are more handsome fellows in the world than you think for!"

Diana smiled. "And the day—is that an accident, too, father? And—" here she pointed upwards, apparently at a certain constellation near Orion—"is that conjunction one that might occur again?"

"Now Diana! no fatalism! Be yourself, my little girl!"

"But . . . it frightens me, father!" she murmured, with a sudden tremulousness, clinging closer to his arm, and leaning her cheek on his broad shoulder. But at this juncture, being determined to hear no more, I got up from the sofa, and, walking to the other end of the room, began to turn over a portfolio of drawings that was resting on an easel there. I had just come upon one representing a young man in a reclining posture, the right knee drawn up, the left arm hanging relaxed, and the head bowed forward in a shadow that obscured the face, rendering its contour indistinguishable:—I was just examining this sketch when my uncle and cousin, still arm-in-arm, approached.

"Your lunar passport is made out," said the former; "and here is the courier to guide you thither, if you feel equal to the journey. Ah!" he added, bending over the sketch that I still held in my hand, "how does that design strike you?"

"It puzzles me!" I replied. "In the general pose it is very like a famous antique bas-relief of Endymion that I remember seeing in Rome, and which is supposed to date back to the time of Phidias."

"An antique bas-relief of the time of Phidias!" repeated my uncle, musingly. "How now, Diana!"

"Of Endymion, did you say?" she asked, withdrawing from her father's arm, and taking hold of the free end of the paper with a hand that quivered a little, though her voice was steady. "And this is like it?"

"Except this, and this," answered I, indicating certain parts of the design, "it might have been copied directly from the bas-relief."

"But in those parts the sketch is original, eh?" put in my uncle.

"No—not even there," I replied; "and that is what puzzled me. There is another design of an Endymion—an Egyptian or an Assyrian one, I forget which—but at any rate it was evidently the model of the Greek, and of course immensely more ancient. Now, though the two designs—the older and the later one—closely resemble each other in the main, there are two or three marked points of difference; and this drawing, following as it does the ancient version in those points, while in its general style it takes more after the Greek, seems to be a sort of combination of them both. Certainly," I added, "it is more life-like and natural than either. Where did you get it?"

"It's one of your cousin's performances," said my uncle, carelessly.

"You have been in Europe, then?" I demanded of her, surprised.

"No!" she answered softly, with an indrawing of the breath.

"How strange, then, that you should have independently hit upon so wonderful a likeness!" I exclaimed. "I am more puzzled than before!"

"It is strange! and yet," said she, with an unfathomable look in

her hazel eyes, "perhaps I may have copied it from an original older than either the Grecian or the Egyptian! Cousin Will, do you remember the faces? were they alike in both? and was there anything—anything noticeable in the features?"

It seemed to me that these last questions were asked with an especial earnestness which her low utterance could not wholly conceal. Whether or not my answer relieved her suspense I could not determine.

"No, they were not alike," I said: "and so far as I remember there was nothing remarkable about either of them. They simply followed the ordinary classical type of their several schools."

"I have made a separate study of a head and face for my drawing," she remarked, after a pause. "Some time, perhaps, you will see it. But now, if you are ready, we will go up to the observatory."

"Meanwhile I shall have another cigar on the balcony," said my uncle. "If you should wish to join me any time during the next hour or two, nephew, you will find me there."

He grasped my hand for a moment, and then I followed Diana out of the room.

VI.

We were at the top of the tower staircase. Diana pressed against a panel at the side of the door, and it swung inwards on its hinges, easily and yet ponderously. We entered, and I found myself in a tiny ante-chamber, with a heavy curtain of embroidered leather in front of me. This Diana pushed aside sufficiently for me to pass on to the room beyond, while she closed the door behind.

It was a circular room, like my own chamber below, but much loftier, and without any sign of windows. A mild half-light descended from a ring of shaded lamps affixed round the walls at a height of nine feet from the floor, leaving the vaulted ceiling in shadow. The walls below the lamps were draped with a kind of tapestry of rich dark hues: and at one side stood a tall carved cabinet of black wood, furnished with a pair of folding-doors and a broad desk, upon which were books and some small instruments of polished brass. On the side opposite the cabinet was a deep niche in the stone wall, supporting a slender antique vase of embossed silver.

These particulars I noticed but passingly; that which immediately and predominantly commanded my attention was the mighty instrument which, with its appurtenances, rose pyramid-like in the centre of the room; lifting heavenward its awful eye, that had looked familiarly upon the mysterious faces of the planets, and revealed their secrets to man. The upper portion of the shaft was enveloped in the obscurity which brooded in the vault; but this dusky veil only deepened its impressiveness. Below, the softened lamplight shone upon a complex

arrangement of machinery ; wheels and grooves and chains, and subtle levers, all artfully contrived to turn and slide without jar or irregularity, obedient to the light touch of Diana's taper finger. She was the priestess of this temple : here were her virgin stronghold and her home. During the few moments that I had been plunged in contemplation she had thrown on, over the black silk demi-toilette which she had worn during the evening, a flowing mantle of delicate texture, dark as night, with wide drooping sleeves, and falling in soft folds from her shoulders to the floor. Upon her auburn hair she had placed a black velvet cap, such as the astrologers of old used to wear ; and as she now stood before me, smiling at me out of her unfathomable nixie eyes, she looked more like an enchantress, wise with the arts of witchcraft, than like a mortal maiden with warm blood and human affections. Was she a witch indeed ?

" This clockwork can be adjusted so as to keep any one of the stars or planets within the field of the telescope," said she, quietly, laying her hand upon one of the wheels. " I have only to move this, and one of these, and then there is nothing more to be done but to sit in the chair, there, and look through the lens."

" Shall we see the moon to-night ?" I asked.

" Yes, if you like."

She pressed a lever somewhere in the machinery, and immediately the vast tube, that seemed fixed so immovably, swung noiselessly and steadily towards the right, and, pausing there without shock or tremor, waited motionlessly as before.

" It looks at the moon now," said Diana in a low voice.

" It obeys you as if it could hear you speak," I responded in the same hushed tone ; for as the moment of vision approached nearer, nervousness which I could not wholly control pervaded my body, and made me fearful of betraying some symptom of unmanly agitation to my companion.

Diana touched the spring which she had before pointed out to me ; then laid her finger on her lip and drew me back a step.

All the wheels were in motion ; and grandly, slowly, almost imperceptibly, as the sweep of that far-distant planet which it was following in its course through space, the marvellous engine moved along its orbit. At the same moment a strain of subdued melody, resembling somewhat the music of *Æolian* harps heard far off, floated out and palpitated upon the still air of the vaulted room. The strain grew louder and clearer, then sank again to whisperings almost inaudible : and then once again increased in power and volume, seeming now like a chorus of angelic voices chanting a hymn of praise. I held my breath to listen, and, for a time, forgot surprise in the pure pleasure of the ear.

"What is it?" I whispered at length.

"I call it the song of the moon," answered Diana. "You will hear it whenever the moon's rays fall upon the glass. I love it the best of all."

"There are others, then?"

"Each planet has its song, different from all the others: and the stars also; but those we cannot hear."

This was said so quietly, and with an air so grave, that I knew not whether my cousin expected me to take it seriously. "Are you really an enchantress," I asked, "that you can bring down to earth the music of the spheres, as well as make their mysteries visible?"

"Why not? is one more wonderful than the other?" she returned, with a faint smile. "But you must not expect me to tell you all my secrets at once, Cousin Will. Think of me as an enchantress for to-night. I am not the first who has practised magic in this tower. It was built, they say, in the time of King Arthur, by the magician Merlin; and Friar Bacon once lived here, and worked upon the problem of the Speaking Head. But none of them could do what I can do, or ever saw what I have seen a thousand times!"

If it had been Diana's intention—as it certainly was not—deliberately to inspire me with a sentiment of superstitious awe and expectation, by working upon an imagination always apt enough for the marvellous and recondite, she could not have chosen a more fitting time and means. The strange aspect of the lofty room, dimly illuminated below and shadowy overhead; the fantastic legends associated with it; the weird music that still trembled through it; and above all the spectacle of that potent instrument even now moving in harmony with the march of the universe;—these things alone might have stimulated the emotions of one of firmer nerves and sturdier health than mine. But, such as I then was, their influence upon me was profound and overmastering. The facts of my past life in the world, the little learning I had acquired—the material certainties, in short, whereby men are accustomed to steady themselves when assailed by aught that threatens to undermine the teachings of their experience—were become to me as nothing. Not what I had known and touched and could explain was true; but, rather, all that was inexplicable and supernatural. I was in love with mystery, and with Diana, and desired no better than to believe in them and do homage to them.

As for Diana, familiar from childhood with the scene and the proceedings, her mood was of composed and deep-seated enjoyment; and she was doubtless far from suspecting my overstrained and almost hysteric plight: nay, I myself was as yet unaware of the degree of my prostration. I watched my cousin walking hither and thither, quietly and methodically completing I knew not what further prepara-

tions for the coming revelation, until, unable longer to endure inactive suspense, I asked whether the moment for looking through the telescope were yet arrived.

"There is only one thing more to do, but that is the most important of all," was her answer. "Sit in this chair, and you shall see."

She took hold of the lower end of the telescope, which was there about nine inches in diameter, removed the brass cover from it, and then, with a few light turns, unscrewed the ring that held the lens in place, and brought away the lens itself in her hands. I noticed that it was thicker through the centre than the generality of lenses, and that at one part of the rim there was a small projection, like the neck of a phial, giving the whole something of the appearance of a circular, flattened crystal flask.

She was about to set it edgewise in a velvet-covered frame evidently made for the purpose, when, glancing at me, she seemed to alter her intention.

"You may hold it if you like, Cousin Will," she said; "but hold it fast, for it is more precious than adamant. There is none other like it in the world."

She put it in my hands. "This is not a lens!" was my thought, as I felt its weight; "it is hollow!"

"Yes," she said, answering my look with a smile; "it is a phial, made to hold an elixir more precious than itself. That silver vase is full of it; and now I am going to pour some into the phial. Then you will see something beautiful!"

"Is this that discovery you spoke of this afternoon?"

"Not the elixir; but the use to which we put it. The receipt for the elixir is a heritage from some of those old alchemists who used to carry on their experiments in this tower hundreds of years ago; and my father thinks it had been handed down to them from some philosopher far more ancient still. At all events he found the parchment on which the receipt was written in a concealed hollow of this wall—in that niche where the silver vase now stands. After long study, he succeeded in deciphering it; and then the elixir was made."

"But what was it originally intended for—by the alchemists?"

"My father thinks it may have been their famous drink of Immortality," replied Diana, taking the silver vase from its niche as she spoke. "But he did not taste it, for he neither wished to live for ever nor to die by poison—and this may as well be an *aqua toffana* as an *elixir vitæ*! But, while brewing it, he had noticed the strange effect of moonlight upon it; and as he was there searching for some means of strengthening the telescope, it occurred to him to try an experiment. And this was the result!"

In saying these words, she slipped a funnel into the neck of the

phial or lens, and, while I steadied the latter upon my knees, she poured into it about a pint of liquid from the vase. Then, taking it heedfully from my hands, she replaced it in its proper position in the neck of the telescope, secured it there by screwing on the ring, and finally, by turning a button attached to the pipe that supplied the lights, they were at once extinguished, and we were left in darkness.

Yet no—not entirely so! For, when my eyes had had time to recover from the first impression of blackness, I began to perceive that there was still light in the room, though proceeding from a different quarter. It seemed to have a deep crimson hue; and in the course of a minute or two I could see it coming through the lens of the telescope, and evidently taking its colour from the liquid with which Diana had just filled it. But whence did this light originate?

I must have asked this question aloud, for I heard Diana's voice answer:—

“It is the light of the moon. Stoop down, now, and watch the elixir change. But be careful not to look through it, until I give you leave!”

I stooped accordingly, and fixed my eyes upon the crystal. The sound of the mysterious music, rendered more weird by the darkness, did not prevent me from hearing the soft breathing of my companion, whose presence I felt close beside me, though I could not see her. She, too, was watching the changes of the magic liquid; and strange and beautiful in truth they were!

The crimson tint, at first deep and turgid, gradually cleared, until it shone like the purest ruby. A kind of fermentation, momentarily increasing, seemed to be at work within it, and I presently noticed minute currents of blue twisting about like tiny serpents, and multiplying as they moved, until the crimson grew to violet, which, in the course of a few minutes, cleared and strengthened in its turn to a brilliant and superb purple, perfectly translucent, and emitting a lustre so powerful as partly to reveal the figure of Diana, kneeling, with her hands folded upon her lap, in an attitude of thoughtful contemplation. But the fermentation was not yet complete. Again the slender serpents twined and wreathed themselves, dispelling more and more the remaining rays of crimson, and creating a uniform and ever intensifying light of azure. It was an azure as pure as that of an Egyptian sky, but possessing a wealth and sparkle of colour such as no atmosphere can rival—the sparkle of the ideal sapphire which no lapidary has yet discovered.

“What causes this?” I whispered at length; “and how is it to end?”

“It is the moon purging the elixir of its last earthly impurities,

and making it fit to hold its image," replied Diana gravely. "These changes that you see following each other so rapidly would ordinarily last for days; it is the power given to the rays by the other lenses that hastens the work. See! the blue is already becoming green: now the green brightens into yellow: and now . . ."

As she spoke, the fermentation gradually ceased; the liquid, having passed through all the preparatory stages, now gleamed white and pure as a diamond. The illumination which it gave forth was so intense, and yet so soft, that it permeated the whole chamber with an unearthly radiance—with the cold, colourless radiance of another world. It was as if the spirit of the moon, obeying the mandate of some irresistible spell, were present with us in that ancient tower.

"It is finished!" said Diana, with a vibration of solemnity in her tones. "The moon is as near us now as the valley over which you saw her rise this evening. Are you ready?"

Why did I hesitate? The moment for which I had so ardently wished was come. I needed but to turn my face to behold a spectacle which no human beings save Diana and her father had yet looked upon, and which, perhaps, none other than ourselves might ever see. Was it fear that withheld me? Fear of what? Of the revelation on the brink of which I stood? or of myself?

"Are you ready?" Diana repeated.

"No!"

She gazed at me with eyes in which I dreaded to detect indignation or contempt. But no!—their glance was of grave and searching inquiry, nothing more. I forced myself to attempt an explanation of what I myself did not understand.

"I cannot trust myself, Diana. What right have I to know things which God has kept secret from other men? might it not be a kind of profanation? I am not like you—I have not lived so spotless and serene a life. You are worthy of this revelation: no one besides you is worthy of it. Even your father dares not share it with you any longer—in spite of his strength, he distrusts his strength for that. What would you think of me, if I were to look, and yet not see what you see, or feel what you feel? The risk is too great."

It seemed to me a long while before Diana answered; and first, she sighed.

"You may be right: I have not thought of it—I do not wish to think of it," she said. "And perhaps all my life has been wrong—a mistake! Why should what is wrong for you be right for me?"

"There is no parallel between us, Diana."

"I am a woman and you are a man; we were both born on the earth, to live here and to die here. Only I have lived alone in this

tower, and no one has taught me what was good or bad : I tried to find the good in my own way : my father left me to myself : you are the only other man I have ever talked with. I had no companions in the world, so I tried to find one somewhere else. But perhaps it was only something within myself that I found, after all. I cannot tell : I hoped you might be able to help me, cousin."

" You misunderstand me," startled and agitated by the new tone in which she spoke, so different from her usual quiet and cool reserve. " I would not presume to criticise you, Diana : you seem to me so good and noble that—that sometimes, for my own sake, I almost wish you were less so ! It was of my own weaknesses and imperfections that I was thinking."

" If all the world were no more imperfect than you, I think I should love the world," said Diana, simply.

I felt the blood come to my face ; but I feared so much to shock her by speaking too soon what was in my heart to speak, that I kept silence. Presently she said—

" You will not look, then ?"

There was in her voice an accent of such wistful appeal as made my refusal seem cowardly and selfish.

" If you ask it—if you wish it—I will !"

There was a moment's pause.

" I do not wish it !" she exclaimed, standing erect and lifting her head with a gesture of decision. " If I have done wrong, I must teach myself to feel it—will you leave me now, cousin ? I need to be alone a little, I think." I went to the door ; she followed me, and held out her hand. " Good night, Will," she said : " pleasant dreams ! we shall see each other again in the morning."

VII.

It is needless to say that I did not go back to the dining-room in search of my uncle. What with the turmoil, of one emotion and another, I had never felt myself less capable of coherent and rational conversation. My whole body was thrilling with excitement ; my brain was confused and dizzy. Once or twice I narrowly escaped missing my footing on the narrow winding stair. Having gained my room, I dropped into the chair by the window, thoroughly exhausted. The moon, I remember, though now high in the zenith, was visible from where I sat, and her rays fell upon my upturned face as I lay back, breathing heavily. Before many minutes had passed, I must have fallen asleep. How long my sleep lasted I do not know ; but it was long enough for me to have a very vivid and painful dream.

It seemed to me that a tall dark figure, whose face was concealed by

a veil, stood beside me and put his hand over my eyes. A dull reddish light was before me: I felt impelled to arise and move towards it. The path by which I went was narrow and uneven; it ran along the summit of a ridge which divided an apparently bottomless valley. Lurid vapours, green and yellow, rolled about far below me, or crept sluggishly up the precipitous sides of the ridge. Suddenly the red light which I followed disappeared; I was upon a rock in the midst of a black, waveless ocean. Far away towards the north a small boat flew horizonwards without sails or oars. In the boat sat the tall dark figure, and by his side was Diana. A feeling of anguish and bitter jealousy burned within me: the woman I loved was being taken away from me by a malignant creature who was neither man nor angel. Further sped the boat: yet I saw Diana turn towards me and wave her hand, as if calling me to save her. I sprang into the black water and swam after her with desperate strokes, but the current swept strong against me, and I made no headway. There was no wind, yet the waves now broke in foam around me, and the foam changed to white serpents, coiling in hissing knots. Then I knew that it was no longer a sea in which I struggled, but the infinite void of space. I moved with the constellations, in an appointed orbit, and in that orbit I must move for ever. The boat had spread a pale luminous sail that gleamed against the darkness: it swept on a course concentric with my own, but a myriad leagues away. Never should that fatal gulf be crossed, or its breadth diminished. Rounder grew the sail; it shone like burnished metal; against the disc I saw the shadowy form of the robber, and Diana in his arms. Through all eternity must I behold her thus, without the power to help or comfort her. Suddenly I passed into a great shadow, like the shadow of utter blindness. I heard a soothing melody, as of fairy choristers. A soft hand clasped mine. My dream was over. I was awake!

Awake—yes, that was certain; but where was I? No longer in my own room; I was standing in a silvery gloom, my temples still throbbing with the agony of my dream. Not yet fully master of my faculties, the idea possessed me that, in my course through space, I had fallen upon a grey cloud, which was bearing me gently onwards towards a great brightness, some glimpse of which I saw above the cloud's edge. Guided by the same soft hand, I reached the edge and sat down upon it. The brightness broke upon my eyes in a white lustre, which for a moment forced me to cover my face with my hands. Then I looked again.

Below me, and close at hand, stretched a vast plain, lit by a ghastly light. Vividly clear it was, but terrible: for there was no colour on those pinnacled mountain-summits, nor along their headlong flanks, nor in the depths of the gaping valleys. No colour, no vegetation,

no life: but everywhere a frozen, voiceless, stony immobility, and a metallic lustre, as if the silent feet of innumerable centuries had worn the surface hard and smooth. It was a land of dead volcanoes, whose jagged shadows, blacker than night, lay like blots along the plain. No kindly winds blew down the awful canons; no tender atmosphere softened their iron outlines; no clouds mercifully swathed their grim nakedness. Here seemed to lie the mighty bones of a creation which God had cursed and forgotten, upon which the sun shone only in mockery, and which was cast adrift upon the universe as an appalling warning, and symbol of the doom of sin. Amidst the happy throng of living, sentient planets, this burnt and frozen skeleton was doomed to glide eternally, seen but unseeing, fleeing for ever, but for ever held in place and pitilessly exposed by a mysterious spell. And what was this accursed world, that hung so near beneath my feet that one step, it seemed, would cast me downward upon its needle peaks? Had it a name? That which it had borne when living was buried in the oblivion of countless ages; never again, through all time to come, should tongue of man repeat its forbidden syllables; but there was another name, lawful to know and speak, which now rose intuitively to my lips and found utterance there: "the moon!" And at my ear a low voice that I dimly recognised seemed to confirm my divination: "Yes," it said, "the moon!" I pressed the little hand that still lay within my own, and thanked God that in this hour of unearthly vision it linked me with humanity.

I had beheld enough; but my eyes, sternly fascinated, gazed on in my own despite. In the foreground of the spectral plain an irregular chasm opened, whose perpendicular walls plunged straight down into pitch darkness. On the further verge of this chasm I saw an object which, at the first glance, I took to be a shapeless boulder, arrested there on its way from the mountain summit to the depths below. But, as my glance continued to dwell upon it, it took on form and meaning—a meaning which made my pulses torpid with dismay—which I strove to reject and disbelieve, but which revealed itself in defiance of my efforts with inevitable distinctness. Was it a carven statue? Or had that petrified figure once had life? Some day in the immeasurable past had it stood erect, moved and breathed, loved and hated? The last survivor of its race, had it witnessed the destruction of all existence, and then laid down, defiant, unrepentant, and calm, and composed itself to the stony sleep from which not time itself should see the awakening? There he lay, the nameless Titan, more alone than a mortal brain dare conceive, a being who had spoken his last word, were it curse or blessing—who had done his last deed, were it good or evil—æons before the first vague dawn of life awoke upon our earth—there he lay, lifeless and soulless, yet with the

power to shake my soul to-night, and even to assert a weird rivalry with me in the heart of the woman I loved! For this was the figure whose likeness I had found that evening in Diana's portfolio; it was with his ghastly fate that her girlish fancy had conceived a lofty sympathy: with him her pure thoughts had dwelt throughout her youthful years, dreaming who could tell what dreams of strange romance!—seeing in him, who was revealed to herself alone of all women, who knows what stern ideal of supernatural manhood! So had this immemorial relic of another world swayed the life and moulded the character of a mortal creature of to-day, giving to her feminine heart the companionship which it demanded, but which, in the world of men, had been thus far denied her.

And what were the features of my wondrous adversary—he with whom I must struggle for Diana's love? A shadow lay upon them; as I sought to penetrate it, methought the figure stirred! Was its repose of ages at an end, and had it roused itself to meet my human challenge? It stirred: its stiffened limbs moved with slow majesty; the vast trunk swayed and turned. But lo! the whole mountain side moved with it: the frozen crust, contracting with force irresistible, was crushed against itself, and broken; vast masses, bursting from the rocky bed, piled themselves in jagged pyramids. The lips of the great chasm trembled, and approached each other: but ere they met, I saw the form of the Titan sweep downwards to the brink, shattered and riven, but the Titan still. He paused for an instant over the abyss, then plunged headlong in, and the irrevocable lips ground together above him. Even as he plunged his face met mine, and in its stony lineaments I recognised the prototype of my own!

It was not until two or three months afterwards, as I lay recovering from the brain fever brought on by this night's adventure, that I learned how it came about. I had risen from my chair in my sleep, climbed the tower stairs, and re-entered the observatory, where Diana still remained. The touch of her hand and the sound of the music (which was produced by connecting a sort of organ with the machinery of the telescope) had partially awakened me, though not sufficiently to show me where I was. In this condition I had looked through the lens, and the vast spectacle of the moon, brought within the apparent distance of a mile or two by the magnifying power of the elixir, had burst unexpectedly upon me.

That magic lens, by the way, did not long survive the catastrophe which I witnessed by its aid. I believe Diana destroyed it that same night; I know, at all events, that she never used it again herself. She gave up the moon, much to her father's satisfaction, and, I need not say, to my own unspeakable happiness. It has been the care of

my life to make her feel that better possibilities of enjoyment exist in the world than in the world's satellite. It was only a few years ago, however, that I trusted myself to tell her the story of the Titan's annihilation. We had been looking over an old portfolio of her drawings together, and a Diana of four years of age, with brown hair and hazel eyes, was assisting us in the work.

"Oh! here's papa," she suddenly exclaimed.

Diana's mother took the drawing and examined it.

"I did this before I ever saw papa," she said.

"Then how did you make it so like him?" demanded the small lady.

"I had a presentiment of him, my dear."

"What's a pre-sent——?"

"My presentiment, in this case, was the man in the moon!" said Mrs. Maybold, laughing. "Do you remember, love," she added, handing the drawing to her husband, "my telling you, on a certain evening, that I had made a study of a certain face, and that I would show it you some time? Well, the time has come!"

"I never was so good-looking as that," said Mrs. Maybold's husband, with a sigh. "However, no one will ever be able to compare your presentiment with the reality, for the former disappeared at the moment of my introduction to him." And hereupon I told my tale. "Do you regret him?" I asked, when it was finished.

"If you had told me this five years ago, I might have felt relieved by it," said Mrs. Maybold, after a moment's reflection. "As it is, the news does not affect me one way or the other."

Note to "The New Endymion," by Julian Hawthorne.

I shall not easily forgive my friend Mr. Edward Kemeys, the animal-sculptor, for depriving me of the right of claiming undivided credit for this story. He suggested the main idea of the tale, and some of the best details. As told by him, they seemed to me both poetic and powerful. If my version impresses the reader otherwise, it is my fault. I should regret that Mr. Kemeys had not treated the subject himself, were I not familiar with his genius as embodied in clay and bronze. If I could be the author of his 'Deer and Panther' or 'Bison and Wolves,' which had the place of honour at the Paris Salon this year, I would willingly forego the renown of a better story than I ever expect to write.

The Wraith of Barnjum.

I ALWAYS detested Barnjum; everything the fellow said and did jarred upon me somehow in an absolutely indescribable manner, and I have since learnt that there was something about me which inspired Barnjum with an utterly unreasonable aversion.

And yet, in spite of all this, with that strangely irresistible attraction which so often embitters a mutual antipathy, we were continually seeking one another's society with an ever unsatiated zest.

So essentially unlike were we in every respect—I, with my innate culture and refinement, my almost fastidious exclusiveness in the choice of associates; he, a great red coarse brute, whose conversation was characterised by nothing more attractive than unflattering bluntness and commonplace profanity, that I often asked him with a genuine wish to be informed—what had I in common with him?

It was his proudest boast that he invariably called a spade a spade; this I merely mention to show the kind of man he was, and to convey some idea of the intolerable burden of our ill-assorted companionship.

At last, one ill-starred day, we agreed to go on a walking tour in North Wales together (I hardly know why, but possibly we thought it would annoy one another), and in less than a week had started upon a journey from which but one of us was fated to return!

I pass by the painful details of the first few days of that unhappy tour; I will say nothing of Barnjum's sordid animalism, of his consummate selfishness, his ultra-bucolic indifference to the allurements of nature, or even of the mean way in which he contrived to let me in for railway-tickets and hotel-bills; for I wish to state the facts as impartially as possible, and shrink from being suspected of any attempt to prejudice the reader unduly in my favour.

I pass then to the day, when my disgust, so long pent up, so slightly concealed, culminated in one grand outburst of a not ignoble indignation—to the hour when I summoned moral courage to sever the bonds which linked us so unequally, and which we both so thoroughly loathed.

I remember it so well—that brilliant June morning when we left the Temperance Hotel, Doldwyddlm, and scaled in sulky silence the craggy heights of Cader Idris, which I believe still overhang that picturesque village, while, as we ascended, an ever-changing, ever-widening panorama unrolled itself before my delighted eyes.

The air up there was keen and bracing, and I recollect that I could not repress an æsthetic shudder at the repulsively crude tone which Barnjum's nose was acquiring under its influence.

I mentioned it as a friend, when he retorted with the brutal personality which formed so strong an ingredient of his character.

"Hang it, Buster" (my name is Buster), he said, with his accustomed profanity; "if you could see yourself now in that suit of yours and that hat, you'd let my nose alone."

I replied with a sarcasm that was, I felt afterwards, a little too crushing, that I had every intention of doing so; and he remarked offensively enough that no one could help his nose getting red, but that any man in my position could at least *dress* like a gentleman.

I took no notice of this insult—a Buster can afford to pass them by (indeed I find it actually cheaper to do so), and I flatter myself that my dress is distinguished by a studied looseness and carelessness which are not wholly destitute of the artistically picturesque.

We presently found ourselves skirting the edge of a huge chasm whose steep sides sloped sheer down into the slate-blue waters of the lake below; the view from where we stood was magnificent, to our right were the Peaks of Dolgelly and the plain of Capel Curig, below were sun-lit waters with a dancing fleet of herring-boats, and there over on the left sparkled the falls of Y-Dydd. It was a view which even the most ardent sightseers have hitherto managed to miss, but that only requires to be known to gain a world-wide celebrity. As my eye took it all in, I longed to say something worthy of the occasion, and being possessed of a considerable fund of delicately dried humour, I busied myself in the construction of a remark which, while blending one or more of the quaint names of the vicinity into one sentence, should yet distinctly suggest an entirely different impression, at the same time, even to my dull-witted companion.

Some men have an especial talent for this species of intellectual exercise.

But Barnjum anticipated me: "*You ought to live up here, Buster,*" he said, "*on the top. You were made for this old mountain.*"

I was not displeased, for, Londoner as I am, I love the heights with all a poet's enthusiasm.

"Perhaps I was," I said; "but why do you think so?"

"Why," he said, with his odious grin, "this is Cader Idris, ain't it? and you're a *cad awry dressed*, ain't you?—'Cader Idrissed,' don't you see?" (he was dastard enough to explain)—"that's why."

He had been laboriously leading up to this for the last ten minutes.

I can conscientiously declare that it was not the personal outrage that roused me; but a paltry verbal quibble like that, uttered amidst such scenery and at that altitude, required a protest in the name of

indignant nature, and I protested accordingly, though with an imprudent impetuosity which I cannot bring myself to approve even now.

He happened to be standing on the brink of the abyss, and had just turned his back upon me, when, with a passionate thrust of my right foot, I launched him into space with the chuckle at his unhallowed jest yet hovering upon his lips. I am aware that it was a liberty which, under ordinary circumstances, even the licence of a life-long friendship would hardly have excused, but I felt it due to myself to let him see plainly that I desired our acquaintanceship to cease from that moment, and a more delicate hint would have been thrown away upon him.

I waited till the dull metallic clang of his head, as it repeatedly struck upon the rocks in his descent, had died away on the breeze, and then I slowly and thoughtfully retraced my steps and left a spot which was already becoming associated with memories the reverse of pleasurable.

* * * * *

I took the next up-train, and succeeded in dismissing all thoughts of Barnjum from my mind till I reached town ; if I allowed myself to dwell upon the subject at all, it was to experience a certain relief in the reflection that we understood one another at last. But when I had paid my cab, and was ringing the bell before my lodgings, the driver called me back : " Beg pardon, sir," he said hoarsely, " but you've bin and left something white in the cab."

I turned and looked in ; there, grinning at me from the interior over the folding doors of the hansom, was the wraith of Barnjum.

I had presence of mind to reward the man for his honesty and go upstairs to my rooms with as little noise as possible ; Barnjum's ghost followed me in and sat down coolly before the fire in my armchair, when I took the opportunity to examine the apparition thoroughly.

It was quite the conventional ghost, filmy, transparent and shadowy enough, and a very tolerable likeness of Barnjum ; and before I retired, I had thrown both my boots and the contents of my book-case through the thing without appearing to do more than temporarily inconvenience it, which convinced me that it was a being from another world.

Its choice of garments certainly struck me as unusual, however, for, while I cheerfully allow that it is becoming, if not desirable, for apparitions to assume robes of some description, Barnjum's ghost rejoiced in a combination of costume which I have never seen before or since either on the person of spirit or mortal.

It wore that evening, to the best of my recollection, striped

pantaloon, a surplice, and a cocked hat, but it subsequently went through such rapid and eccentric changes of costume that I can only explain them on the supposition that there is a vast supernatural theatrical wardrobe somewhere, and that Barnjum's ghost had the run of it.

Before I had been in very long, my landlady came up and saw it, when she objected very strongly, declaring that she wouldn't have no such things about her house, and if I must keep ghosts, I had better go somewhere else; but I pacified her at last by representing that I was only taking care of it for a friend.

When she had gone I sat up till late, thinking calmly over my position and the complications that might ensue from it.

And here I could, of course, if I chose, harrow the reader's feelings and work upon his sympathies by a graphic description of my terror, or an elaborate analysis of my remorse; but I prefer the less effective but more straightforward course of stating nothing but the plain facts, and of describing nothing but my actual feelings. My first impression had not unnaturally been that it was all nerves or indigestion, but I soon saw the improbability of a cabman being plagued by a digestion, or a landlady by a morbid excess of imagination, and admitted to myself that it was a real ghost and would probably continue to haunt me for the rest of my natural life.

I was disgusted with such an exhibition of low malice on Barnjum's part, pardonable perhaps in a Christmas annual with a full-page illustration, but an anachronism in real life and the height of summer; still I brought common sense to bear upon the subject, and told myself philosophically that I had made my ghost and must live with it.

At the worst Barnjum in the spirit was a decided improvement upon Barnjum in the flesh, and I was glad to find that the spirit was not a talking variety and consequently unlikely to tell tales; and luckily for me, as Barnjum was quite unknown about town—his only relative being an aunt at Camberwell—it was improbable that any suspicion would be excited by chance recognition in the circle to which I belonged. It would be folly to shut one's eyes to the fact that it might require considerable nerve to re-enter society in the company of a fancifully attired apparition which nobody would know anything about. Society would sneer perhaps at first, and make remarks, but then I was not without tact and knowledge of the world, and was well aware that men have overcome far more formidable objects to social success.

So that, instead of giving way to unreasonable panic, I took the more manly course of determining to live it down, though, alas! I was doomed to find fate too strong for me in this respect, and to see myself bitterly punished for my indiscretion. When I went out next morning after breakfast, Barnjum's ghost came too and followed me

all down St. James's Street, much to my embarrassment, and in fact for weeks after it scarcely ever left me, rendering me the innocent victim of mingled aversion and curiosity.

At first I affected to be unaware of anything unusual, and ascribed it to other people's diseased fancy, but, as the whole town soon began to ring with the story, this dissimulation became too difficult to sustain, so I gave out that it was an artfully contrived piece of spectral mechanism, of which I was the inventor and sole patentee.

This gained me no small reputation in the scientific world, a result which lasted till Maskelyne and Cooke grew envious and declared that they knew the secret of it, and could manufacture a much better spectral machine themselves, which they presently did.

Then I admitted in confidence to two of the aristocracy that it was a bonâ-fide apparition, and that I rather liked such things about me. This frankness afforded me a temporary salvation, for the story went the round of the Pall-Mall clubs and Belgravian boudoirs till I found myself a lion of the largest size.

I was asked out everywhere on the tacit understanding that I was to bring the ghost too, and Barnjum's ghost, as all of gentle birth who read this will well remember, appeared at all the best houses in town for the remainder of the season, while, in the autumn, several wealthy people of the Manchester School asked me down for some shooting, solely, I honestly believe, in the hope that they would persuade the ghost to remain with them permanently and impart the necessary air of ancestral mystery and legend to their bran-new palaces; and I devoutly wish they had. But the novelty soon wore off—too soon in fact—for, fickle as society is, I have no hesitation in asserting that we ought to have lasted it at least another season, if Barnjum's ghost had not persisted in making itself so ridiculously cheap that society was as sick of it as I was myself in a fortnight.

And from that time I saw only the reverse of the medal; I soon noticed that the phantom had a trick of illuminating itself with a bilious green light in the evenings, which rendered it a depressing companion for any one inclined to low spirits; I still saw a good deal of it, though it occasionally absented itself for days together, which only made me more uneasy however than while I had it under my eye. So great was my dread that the people at the Polytechnic, or some one else who understands spectres, should get hold of it, and perhaps compel it to compromise me, that I must have spent pounds in advertisements about it.

I had to leave the rooms where I had been so comfortable; my landlady said the street was blocked up by a mob of the lowest description from seven till twelve every evening, and she really could not put up with it any longer.

I found that this was owing to Barnjum's ghost getting out upon the roof every night after dark and playing the fool among the chimney-pots, which led to my being indicted five times for committing a common nuisance by obstructing the thoroughfare, and once for collecting an unlawful assembly; I spent all my spare cash in fines.

It is true that there were portraits of us both in the illustrated weekly papers, but this was small comfort, and did not blind me to the fact that Barnjum's ghost was slowly but surely ruining me both in fortune and reputation.

Shortly after this it followed me to the Underground Railway, and there behaved in a manner that very justly incensed the authorities, and led to a lawsuit which made a nine days' sensation in the legal world.

I refer to the celebrated case of "The Metropolitan District Railway *v.* Buster," in which the important principle was once for all decided by the court that no railway company is bound by the terms of its contract to carry ghosts, spectres, or any other supernatural beings, and that the company can exact a heavy penalty from passengers infringing its regulations in this respect.

This was of course a decision against me, and carried heavy costs, which my private fortune was just sufficient to meet.

But Barnjum's ghost was alienating me from society also, for at one of the best balls of the season, at a house where I had just succeeded with infinite pains in establishing a precarious footing, that miserable phantom ruined me for ever by executing a shadowy but unspeakably offensive species of cancan between the dances. I apologised to my hostess, feeling indirectly responsible for its behaviour, but the affair got into the weekly society journals, and she never either forgave or recognised me again.

It was about this time, too, that the committee at my club—the most exclusive in London—requested me to resign, intimating that, in introducing a spirit of disreputable character amongst them (it had followed me into the building arrayed in a highland costume and a tall hat), I had abused the privileges of membership.

I was at the bar, but no respectable firm of solicitors would employ a man who had such an unprofessional thing as a phantom about his chambers, so that I soon found myself obliged to throw up my profession, and I had no sooner changed my last sovereign than I was summoned for keeping a ghost without a licence!

Some men would have given up in despair there and then, but I was made of sterner stuff; besides, an idea had occurred to me by which I might possibly turn the tables upon my shadowy persecutor: it was this—Barnjum's ghost had ruined me, but why should I not endeavour to turn an honest penny by Barnjum's ghost? It was genuine—it was

in some respects original—there were valuable moral lessons to be learnt from it, and though it had long failed to attract in town, I saw no reason why it should not make a great hit in the provinces.

So that in a very short time I had made all the necessary preliminary arrangements for running Barnjum's ghost on a short provincial tour, and had decided to open at Tenby in South Wales.

I took every precaution, travelling by night and keeping indoors all day, lest the shade, which was deplorably destitute of all professional pride, should get about and exhibit itself beforehand for nothing; so when it first burst upon a Welsh audience from the platform of the Assembly Rooms, Tenby, no ghost could have been more enthusiastically received, and for the first and last time I felt positively proud of it.

But after the applause had subsided there was an awkward pause. It had not occurred to me that it would be necessary to say anything in particular during the exhibition, beyond the customary assurance that there was no deception and no concealed mechanism, which I could give with a good conscience; but it seems that the audience had expected a comic duologue, with incidental music and dances.

This I was wholly unequal to, even supposing Barnjum's ghost had consented to play up to me, which I could scarcely, under the circumstances, expect it to do. As it was, it did nothing at all except grimace at the audience and make an idiotic fool of itself and me, which soon exhausted and disgusted them. I could have made a far deeper impression upon them with an ordinary magic lantern; and at last, goaded to madness, they rose as one man, hurled chairs through the ghost at me, and wrecked the stage before leaving in a whirlwind of righteous indignation.

It was all over. I was a ruined man, and my weak trust in the humanity of a spectre had put the finishing touch to my misfortune. I paid for the smashed windows and broken chairs, and took a third-class ticket to London that night, with feelings that can neither be envied nor described.

* * * * *

It was Christmas Eve, and I was sitting gloomily in my shabby Bloomsbury lodgings, watching, with a bitter loathing, Barnjum's ghost, arrayed in a Roman toga and top boots, gliding aimlessly about the horsehair furniture. I was completely and utterly miserable, and bitterly did I now repent my conduct in parting with Barnjum so abruptly by the bleak cliff side, that bright June morning, six short months ago. Nemesis, in the form of a weak-minded but remorseless phantom, had hounded me down to poverty and ruin. I felt so low-spirited just then that I had serious thoughts of seeking out a police-

inspector, and sobbing out the truth upon his breast, from which I infer that my liver must have been very much out of order.

I cursed my fate, and the day I was born. I cursed Barnjum and his insidious shade, when suddenly there came a tap at the door.

It opened, and the figure of Barnjum, as he had appeared in the flesh, strode solemnly in. "Villain, cowardly villain!" was its first observation.

"So long as your—your proprietor contented himself with one apparition," I said, with a sort of desperate calm, "I bore it—I did not enjoy it, but I endured it. But *two* ghosts is really carrying it too far . . . It is more than any one man's fair allowance. I defy you both . . . I will find means to escape you . . . I will leave the world!" I cried, growing excited. "Other people can be ghosts as well as you. . . . One step more and I blow my brains out."

There was no firearm of any description in the house, but I meant what I said.

"You couldn't do better," said the figure; "but it happens I'm not a ghost. I'm alive; and to come back to the point—scoundrel!"

"If you *are* alive," I said, divided between relief and alarm, "will you have the goodness to tell me what right you have to that apparition? It's been annoying me very much."

"I know nothing about it," he said; "but I hope it will go on annoying you. It serves you right."

I appealed to his better feelings.

"It is sad," I said, "to meet again like this; we parted, I know, not on the best of terms, but it is ridiculous to cherish an old grudge all this time. Don't you see the absurdity of it yourself?"

But he didn't.

"It is Christmas Eve, Barnjum," I continued; "Christmas Eve. At this hour thousands of throbbing human hearts are speeding the cheap but genial Christmas card to those of their relations they consider at all likely to respond with a turkey; the imaginative costermonger is investing soiled evergreens with a purely fictitious value, and the cheery publican is sending the member of his village goose-club away rejoicing with a shot-distended bird and a bottle of poisonous port. Hear my appeal: if I have wronged you, I have suffered. That detestable thing has poisoned my happiest hours, and clouded my prosperity at the zenith of its brightness; it has been, in short, the deuce of a nuisance! I ask you, as a man, as an individual, to call it off. You can do it if you choose, you know you can. I'd do it for *you*!"

Barnjum hesitated a moment; some waits outside struck up 'Silver Threads among the Gold,' and as he listened his face twitched—he burst into tears; I had conquered.

"Be it so!" he said between his sobs; and then turning to the ghost, "Here—you—what's your name? Avaunt!—D'ye hear?—Hook it!"

To my joy it obeyed him immediately; for, as he spoke, it gave way all over, and shrivelling up into a sort of cobweb, was drawn by the draught into the fireplace and carried up the chimney.



The Milky Way.

FROM THE SWEDISH OF TOPELIUS.

1.

Lo, now the lamp is quenched, and the night is still and clear,
And now rise up sweet memories of many a vanished year,
And quaint old legends flit around, like cloud-streaks in the sky,
And wondrous are the feelings then that make our hearts beat
high.

2.

The bright-eyed stars look down through the sheen of the wintry
night,
Calm as though Death had fled from earth before their holy light.
Canst understand their silent speech?—I mind me of it still
That legend once they taught me. You shall hear it, if you will.

3.

Far up amid the Afterglow he lived upon a star;
And in another world, another clime, she dwelt afar.
Now she was called Salami, he Zulamith, by name;
And they two loved each other dear, and each loved each the same.

4.

Whilome, they both had dwelt on earth and loved already there,
But cruel Death had parted them, and night, and sin, and care;
And on them, in the sleep of Death, white wings had grown
apace,
And they were doomed on two far distant stars to seek their place.

5.

Though each dreamt of the other in their azure home above,
There lay a fathomless abyss of suns between their love;
And worlds, whereof the least God's own Omnipotence displays,
Lay, in their hosts, 'twixt Salami and Zulamith ablaze.

6.

And then, consumed of his desire, did Zulamith one night
Begin from world to world to build himself a bridge of light;
And then did Salami, like him, from *her* sun's glowing shore
Begin a bridge from pole to pole, as he had done before.

7.

One thousand years so built they, with faith that wavered ne'er,
And thus was built the Milky Way, the starry bridge so fair
That fathoms Heaven's farthest depths, and links the planet band,
And spans the mighty sea of space with light from strand to strand.

8.

The Cherubim were seized with fear, and flew to God's white throne :

—"O Lord! see thou what Salami and Zulamith have done!"

But God Almighty smiled, and, as a glory spread below :

—"What in My world true love hath built that will I not o'erthrow!"

9.

And Salami and Zulamith, so soon their toil was done,
Leapt forth into each other's arms; and, straight, a brilliant sun,
The brightest in the vaulted sky, shone out where they had been,
As through a thousand years of grief a heart may bloom again.

10.

For all who on this dreary earth once loved aright and true,
And fall apart through Death, and care, and sin, and night, and
rue,

So this their love be strong enough to link the stars with love,
May trust such love for sure to find their longings rest above.

CLAUD TEMPLAR.

(The Author has not attempted to depart from the quaint diction or metre of the Swedish.)

An Under-studied Part.

SOME little time ago an account was given in the pages of *TEMPLE BAR* of a brilliant ballet designed by Théophile Gautier, but never performed, entitled 'Le Preneur des Rats.' It is proposed now to call attention to a story of his, which was written in 1841, and which, while it bears traces of Hoffmannesque influence, is as striking in its idea as anything of the same calibre that Hoffmann himself ever wrote, while the style, though not so perfect as in other works of the master, is yet unmistakably the style of Théophile Gautier.

The story is called 'Deux Acteurs pour un Rôle,' and it opens with a description of the Imperial Garden at Vienna, in late November. The garden is empty; the autumn leaves, crisped by the early cold, whirl before the sharp breeze from the north; and the roses trail their drooping limbs, harassed and broken by the wind, through the clinging mud. Only the Broad Walk, gravelled over, is still practicable for walking. Beyond it and its many vistas one sees through the evening mist the Prater and the Danube; and in spite of its wasted and empty look, the garden has that melancholy charm which might well mark it for a poet's walk. In the Broad Walk a young man paces impatiently about; his costume, we are told, was not amiss, but smelt somewhat of the footlights. He wore a black velvet coat with gold and fur-bordered frogs, and his grey trousers were covered with high boots of soft leather. He seemed about twenty-seven years old, his pale and well-cut features were full of intelligence, and there was an ironical turn in the corners of his eyes and mouth. No doubt at the university, which to judge from his cap he had only just left, he had been "a shrewd thing" to the Philistines, and a shining light in the *corps* to which he had belonged. It was pretty clear that he was waiting for some one, and presently this some one appeared in the shape of a pretty and innocent girl, who scolds Heinrich (or, as Gautier oddly calls him, Henrich) playfully for having taken to the stage after studying theology at Heidelberg. Her parents were fond enough of him, and liked him well enough as a future son-in-law, until this mad fancy possessed him, and compelled her to meet him in secret instead of openly.

"I cannot help it," he replies, as many other stage-struck heroes

have done. "The theatre has an invincible attraction for me. Every part that I play gives me a new life, I feel every passion that I interpret; I am by turns Hamlet, Othello, and Karl Moor; and when one can be all this it is difficult to resign oneself to the humble lot of a village pastor."

She answers him that this is all very well, but that he knows well enough her parents will never accept an actor as a son-in-law.

"No," he replies, "not a common actor, but a great one, rich and famous. What will they say then?"

"Then," says Katrina, "the best time of our youth will be over."

"This future," replied Heinrich, "is nearer at hand than you think. I have a good engagement at the Porte de Carinthie, and the manager is so pleased with my playing of my latest part that he has given me a bonus of two thousand thalers."

"Yes," said the girl seriously, "the demon's part in the new piece. I confess, Heinrich, I cannot bear to see a Christian wearing the mask of the Enemy of Mankind, and repeating blasphemous speeches. I went lately to see you on the stage, and at every moment I dreaded lest true infernal fire should burst from the traps down which you descended in a blaze of lycopodium. I came home fearful and anxious, and I had terrible dreams."

"Such stuff as dreams are made of, Katrina. Besides, we shall soon arrive at the last night of the piece, and after that I shall wear no more the black-and-red which troubles you so much."

"I am glad, for strange presentiments trouble me, and I fear this part, so profitable to your earthly glory, may injure your heavenly welfare. I fear, too, you may learn evil ways among the player-folk. I am sure you have forgotten your prayers, and lost the little cross I gave you."

Heinrich at this turned back the lappet of his coat and showed the little cross still glittering on his breast. With this the lovers separated; the girl went home, and Heinrich took his way to the Two-Headed Eagle.

In this famous wine-cellar a numerous company was assembled—Turks, Astracans, Servians, Hungarians, Bohemians, Tartars, and in short people of every kind and nation. All this multitude ate and drank with elbows leaning on the tables; the drink was strong beer and a mixture of new red with old white wine. The food was cold veal, ham, and pastry. Round the tables went in its ceaseless whirl one of those long German waltzes which produce on the Western mind the same effect as *hasheesh* and opium on the Eastern; rapidly the couples went and came; the women, drooping voluptuously in their partners' grasp, swept the cloud of smoke with their skirts. At the counter, some *improvisatori*, accompanied by a guzla-player,

recited a kind of dramatic dirge, which gave delight to a dozen strange figures wearing the *tarboosh* and draped in sheepskin.

Heinrich made his way to the end of the cellar, and approached a table, where were already three or four people in high good humour.

"Ah! It's Heinrich!" cried the eldest. "Take care, boys! *Fenum habet in cornu*. Do you know how terribly fiend-like you were the other night? You really made me shudder. And how can one believe that Heinrich, who drinks beer, and will even brave cold ham like the rest of us, can seem so venomous, so sardonic, so evil, and can with one gesture make a whole audience tremble?"

"It is just in that," said another, "that Heinrich is a great artist, a splendid actor. There is no triumph in playing a character like one's own: a coquette off the stage finds her greatest glory in playing on the stage an innocent child."

Heinrich sat down modestly, and called for a tall glass of mixed wine, while the conversation continued on the same subject. Admiration and compliments poured in on every side. "If Goethe had seen you!" said one. "Let us see if one of your feet is not a hoof!" said another.

Every one pressed round the actor of the day. Women cast tender glances at him, old and new friends came up to exchange one word with him. One man only, at a little table hard by, drummed absently on it with his fingers, and contributed to the chorus of praise nothing but an occasional and doubtful "Humph!" The air of this man was very strange, though his outward garb was that of a Viennese middle-class trader of decent means; his grey eyes had curious green tints, and seemed, like a cat's, to dart phosphoric light. When his thin flat lips parted they showed two rows of teeth white, sharp, and far apart, which had a fierce and cannibalistic look; his long nails, curved and polished, had a strange resemblance to claws. But this view of him only came forth in sudden flashes; if one looked fixedly at him his face quickly reassumed the look of a respectable and good-natured retired trader, and one marvelled how one could have discovered wickedness or devilishness in a countenance so common and trivial.

Heinrich was secretly vexed at this man's indifference, and Altmayer, his youngest and most enthusiastic admirer, could at last bear it no longer, and turning to the stranger said:

"Is it not a fact that no one has ever played Mephistopheles better than my friend here?"

"Humph!" said the unknown, while his green-grey eyes glittered, and he ground his sharp teeth. "Master Heinrich has a pretty talent, and I fully acknowledge it; but he has much to learn before he can play the devil." Then rising suddenly he said, "Have you ever

seen the devil, Master Heinrich?" He asked the question in a tone so strangely mocking that the whole company felt a cold shiver run down their backs. "Yet," he continued, "to see him is quite necessary if your acting is to be true to nature. The other night I was at the theatre, and I was not pleased with your laugh. This, my dear good sir, is how you should laugh." And then, as if by way of a lesson, he sent forth a burst of laughter so sharp, so strident, so sardonic, that the band and the waltzers stopped short on the very instant, and the tavern windows trembled. For some minutes the stranger continued this pitiless and convulsive laugh, which Heinrich and his friends could not help imitating, despite their terror.

When Heinrich took breath again the vaults gave back with a feeble echo the last notes of this appalling laughter, but the stranger had disappeared.

Some days after this surprising but soon-forgotten incident Heinrich played again his devil's part in the theatre. In the stalls sat the stranger of the wine-cellar, and at every word of Heinrich's he shook his head, gave every sign of impatience, and said under his breath, "Poor, poor!" His neighbours, shocked and surprised, applauded all the more, and said "This person seems difficult to please." At the end of the first act, as if impelled by a sudden resolution, he crossed the barrier between the stalls and the orchestra, stepped over the big drum, and disappeared by the musicians' door below the stage.

Heinrich, waiting for the next act, was walking about in the wings, and suddenly, with terror, came upon a mysterious person dressed exactly like himself, who looked at him with eyes the greenish lights of which had in the obscurity of the unlighted stage an astounding depth, and whose sharp white far-parted teeth gave a savage look to his sardonic smile.

Heinrich could not but recognise the stranger of the tavern, or rather the devil himself, for it was he.

"Ah, little man," he said, "you would play the devil! You were mighty poor in the first act, and you would really give these good folk of Vienna too mean an opinion of me. You will permit me to take your place to-night, and, as you might be in my way, I shall send you down to the cellarage."

Heinrich had recognised the Fallen Angel, and felt that he was lost. Mechanically he felt for Katrina's cross, and tried to call for help and to pronounce an exorcism; but terror paralysed his voice, and he could only make a hoarse murmur. The devil put his claw-armed hands on Heinrich's shoulders and forced him through the floor. Then, taking his cue like a practised actor, he stepped on the stage. His incisive, venomous, infernal acting took the audience by surprise.

"Heinrich is better than ever to-night!" they said. What produced the greatest effect was the bitter laughter, like the shriek of a saw, the laughter of a lost soul blaspheming the joys of paradise. Never before had an actor expressed such irony, or sounded such depths of evil. People shuddered while they laughed. The house panted with emotion; phosphoric sparks sprang under the terrible player's fingers, flames followed his footsteps, the lights in the chandelier grew pale, those in the float burnt with strange flashes of red and green, an unknown sulphurous scent hung about the house. The spectators were carried away as if by delirium; thunders of frantic applause marked each sentence delivered by this wondrous Mephistopheles, who often substituted, with excellent effect, improvised verses of his own for those written by the author.

Katrina, to whom Heinrich had sent a ticket, watched all this with anxiety; she could not recognise her lover in this weird actor. She felt, with that divination, that second sight of love, a presentiment of disaster.

The play came to an end amidst inconceivable transports. The public yelled for the reappearance of Mephistopheles. He was looked for in vain, until a servant came to tell the manager that Heinrich had been found in the cellarage, into which he had doubtless fallen through a trap. He was senseless. They carried him home, and when they undressed him saw with astonishment that his shoulders were deeply scored as if with a tiger's claws.

It was, we are told, owing to Katrina's little cross that worse than this had not befallen him. He got well in time, and was offered a brilliant engagement, but refused it, not caring to run the same risk again, and also knowing well that he could never equal his terrible "under-study." So he married Katrina, and lived happily; but people, says Gautier, still wonder why he left the stage just after his greatest triumph.

W. HERRIES POLLOCK.

The Universal Society of Dwindledown.

THIS eminent society held its 113th meeting at the Taykum Down Hotel, Fastboro', on Saturday last; Mr. Paul Starch in the chair. We noticed amongst the celebrities of the evening, Professor Sparrow, Sir William Goose, Sir Erasmus Tattle, Mr. Saul Starkie, Lord Discord, and a host of eminent men who have aired their characters in public during the Victorian era. Col. Crotchet introduced to the meeting the now celebrated Madeline Billiwinks, whose views on public as well as private affairs command such profound attention on the banks of the Pacific as to be telephoned the moment they issue from her lips.

MR. PAUL STARCH opened the meeting with the hope that peace would be preserved by all present. The doctor's report of the last meeting, he said, was highly satisfactory. The bridges of three noses had been restored artificially, and the black eyes had gone through their various stages and colours with such success that he appealed to Mr. Parchment whether he could not report that everything was now ready for a fresh start?

MR. PARCHMENT rose, and, bowing to the Chair, begged to say that whilst he could not commit himself to any positive opinion on anything, yet he thought it just probable that the skirmish which had closed the 112th meeting would bring the subjects under discussion at the last meeting within the range of practical politics. Every one knew his opinion about property, and how little he regarded it except when it happened to be under his care. He was of opinion, as far as he had been able to focus the subject, that everything belonged to everybody. [Murmurs of dissent from Mrs. Wortleberry Sparkins.] I disregard those murmurs, emanating as they do——

MR. PAUL STARCH (the Chairman): Order, order.

MR. PARCHMENT: I never felt in better form in my life.

THE CHAIRMAN: You must confine yourself to the point, Mr. Parchment. Your capacious intellect we all acknowledge; but we should wish it on this occasion dwindled down to the laws of property.

MISS MADELINE BILLIWINKS begged to assure Mr. Parchment that the eyes of the universe and the hopes of the unborn rested on the Dwindledown Society, and——

MR. PARCHMENT: I do *not* like to be interrupted, even by a Billiwinks.

[Here there was a great cry of "Order," "Out with him," "Down with him," "Hear Miss Billiwinks."]

MISS BILLIWINKS: The fire of the future is burning within me. I see our corrupt civilisation rolled up like a blanket, and in its place the pale sheet of purity, truth, and oneness. I see the spoils divided. I hear the shriek of the Past, as the Future treads upon its bunions. I am for Universal Everythingism—for a blessed blending of the Possible with the Impossible. [Immense cheers.] I feel lifted into the atmosphere of the New Order, that sublime disorder which will blot out all lines of demarcation, which recognises no rules, but spreads out its wings of Infinity in every direction at the same time. I make bold to announce an Universal Extirpation of Everything. We shall stand where men stand, men will stand where we stand. Property will be thrown into the air and whistled down the winds of time. Time did I say? there will be no Time. The electric light will put the moon out of print, and do away with the twinkling of stars. The morning and evening will be names read of in musty, discarded volumes. I see a future, ah! [Miss Billiwinks hereupon was helped to some cocoa nibs] when the voice of a Woman will tintinnabulate through the world, and the light of her eye—

PROFESSOR SPARROW: The marvellous eloquence, the exotic phraseology of Miss Billiwinks must not, Mr. Chairman, make us lose sight of the practical purpose of this meeting. I ask emphatically to whom does property belong? To whom does that odious aggregation, that mudheap of matter, appertain? Emphatically I answer, to no one. [Mr Binkie here removed Professor Sparrow's pocket-handkerchief.] Police! Police! I say, I have been robbed. In the discharge of my sacred function, at the very moment when I was arriving at a definition, I have suffered violence at the hands of my fellow-creatures.

THE CHAIRMAN: I apologise to you, sir, on behalf of this meeting [cries of "No!" "No!" "Yes!" "Yes!"], for the insult offered to you, and can assure you Mr. Binkie is already in the hands of the police.

PROFESSOR SPARROW: I feel relieved by that announcement. Had you not been able to convey to me such a pledge, I must have appealed away from this meeting; I must have sought the lands of the Picts and Scots; I must have stirred up the enthusiasm of the "Many Headed."

MISS BILLIWINKS: Don't. That is my copyright.

SIR WILLIAM GOOSE thought that the time had come when a

practical issue should be given to their meeting. He quite agreed with Professor Sparrow about the laws of property, and he looked forward with complacency to Universal Spoliation. He had nothing to lose himself, but if any one would hand him the means, he would show his sense of the favour by taking one of three courses.

SIR ERASMUS TATTLE wanted to know whether wives would be considered property. If so, he should vote for a fresh distribution.

MISS BILLIWINKS: Of course. Woman must be free as air. She must course the world like an Arabian. Her dominion must start from the icebergs and end nowhere.

MR. TITUS: How about Man's Dominion? ["Hear, hear."]

MISS BILLIWINKS: I despise you! your question proves your inequality. You can recognise the sun in heaven, but you do not recognise the rights of a Billiwinks. [Immense cheering.]

MR. SAUL STARKIE (with a slight snuffle): I rise, Mr. Chairman, to propose the first resolution; I come to the point. I hate language, and make as little use of it as I can. I propose that this society, the noble Society of Dwindledown, demands in the interests of everyone Universal Concession.

PROFESSOR SPARROW seconded the proposition, which was carried unanimously, amidst unbounded enthusiasm, in the course of which the cocoa-pot was upset on the cherry silk dress of Mrs. Wortleberry Sparkins.

[Mrs. Sparkins, greatly flurried, in addressing the Chair, turned her back upon the Chairman.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Look to me, Mrs. Sparkins.

MRS. SPARKINS: I look to you for nothing, sir. I expect nothing from man.

THE CHAIRMAN: You must confine yourself to the point, madam.

MRS. SPARKINS: I do not wish to be confined to any point. I abominate restraint. Sparkins knows it.

THE CHAIRMAN: We do not recognise Mr. Sparkins here as an authority, madam.

MRS. SPARKINS: Neither do I, here or elsewhere.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must beg you to speak to the matter before us.

MRS. SPARKINS: I move that a Female is in the chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have to deal, madam, with things as they are.

MRS. SPARKINS: Yes, things! I am avenged. The explosion of everything will obliterate the influence of the Male Sex. We shall then be as the Egyptian women, who had more influence than the jealous males of Europe allow. They could be priestesses; and, let me tell you, Socrates said women were capable of learning anything.

PROFESSOR KNUCLEDOWN begged to confirm this statement. In his opinion women were grossly undervalued. He believed that we were on the eve of a time when the duties of the sexes would be reversed. In a small way he had endeavoured after this in his own house, with results which were astonishing.

COL. CROTCHET then moved that the influence of women had increased, was increasing, and will increase, and that it was desirable to petition Parliament to allow the next Parliament to consist entirely of women. [Mingled cheers and hisses.]

MISS BILLIWINKS rose to second the motion: A glorious era is about to burst upon the world—Man rescued by Woman, rescued from the silly fetters cast on him by the male philosophers of all ages. Mrs. Sparkins had quoted Socrates, but what was Socrates to the argument? He saw to the length of the male mind, saw in fetters, and in the narrowness of masculine ideas. Had this meeting an idea of the illumination which would burst upon the world when women had their rights, as they had hitherto had only their wrongs? Hip and thigh they would smite every form of belief. The human mind would offer a clean surface to all the floating notions of the age.

MR. TRUNK JONES objected to so much declamation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Miss Billiwinks is in order, her observations go to the root of the matter.

MISS BILLIWINKS: I look, sir, for a time when the Red Indian squaw may be Prime Minister of England. A few events may be necessary to bring such a result within the range of practical politics. But, sir, cosmopolitanism pressing its heels upon the degraded head of patriotism, looks for its instruments in the wide world.

MR. PHINEAS PHIZZ saw no reason why women should cease to perform the duties required of them since the days of Eve. For one, he dreaded the ascendancy of a Billiwinks and a Sparkins.

MR. THUMBKIN conceived that Mr. Phizz showed a mean jealousy. Was he prepared to move an amendment?

MR. PHIZZ, about to rise, was assisted to the ground by Miss Billiwinks and Professor Sturgeon.

MISS LAURA LIBERTY: We now see how any amendment of Col. Crotchet's proposal will be received. Perish all opposition to the aspirations of the female mind. It has been asked whether, when we come into Parliament, we shall adopt male attire. A thousand times, No! No! No! [Vociferous cheers.] We go for a Petticoat Government. We go for the working classes, which alone form the nation (*vide* 'Pall Mall,' June 5), and the nation shall be ruled *for* them, and *by* their wives.

COL. CROTCHET's proposition was then put and assented to.

MR. QUINCE BIGOD then rose to propose the last resolution of the evening. He was acquainted, he said, with some people who had a bias in favour of religion, and he was not sanguine enough to suppose that a disease of such long standing as religious belief could be extirpated in a single generation. He recognised that something might have to be done to bring the abolition of religion under the range of practical politics. He was not sure whether what he saw going on just now might not help in the right direction. He felt what a debt of gratitude the nation, or rather, he would say, the working classes, as the larger term of the two, owed to Northampton, the chaste city of Free Thought, the leader in clearing out the dust-bin of prejudice, the meter by which unhappy London would have to regulate its intelligence. London behind the ages as much as Northampton is felicitously in advance of them!

THE CHAIRMAN: You had better move the resolution. [Here followed unlimited chattering, amidst which were heard the shrill treble of Mrs. Sparkins and the flutey tone of Miss Billiwinks.]

MR. QUINCE BIGOD: The just influence of women prevails. I move the resolution that this meeting resolves that the world would be well rid of religion.

MISS BILLIWINKS (with eyes fixed as seeing a vision): I see the dainty light stealing above the horizon; I hear the soft air moving in ripples of music. My soul dances in a pure æther. The world becomes our own. We unloose all bands. We untwist the laws of harmony—

LORD DISCORD: This had better be kept for 'The Nineteenth Century.' It is a guinea a line.

MISS BILLIWINKS: The telephone has already taken it to the golden gate of Francisco, and to the Heathen Chinees.

LORD DISCORD: What becomes of the copyright?

THE CHAIRMAN: Pray proceed, Miss Billiwinks. Future ages are looking down upon you. They must remain unborn, unless this meeting comes to a resolution.

MISS BILLIWINKS: I second the resolution with the spirit of my soul—if I have one—with the light of my mind and, let me add, with the sinew of this arm. I am a devotee. I fall prostrate before the idea centred in myself. Mankind is one great I, all other cases must be effaced. We swim in new waters. We disregard the Past and leap upon the Future.

[The motion for the abolition of religion was then put and carried with enthusiasm.]

LORD DISCORD and the MARQUIS OF VITRIOL rose together, the Marquis yielding to Lord Discord, who moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Mr. Paul Starch, a man, he said, ever ready to lend

his hand to the demolition of demned nonsense. All institutions were demned nonsense. Mr. Paul Starch had, in a moral sense, the start of Adam and Eve. Mentally, he had no ancestors. His vast mind bridged time and space.

MR. WASHINGTON HATCHET briefly seconded the motion, which was carried with only one dissentient voice, that of Mrs. Wortlebury Sparkins.

MR. PAUL STARCH rose to return thanks: He could not disguise from himself that this Society had much yet to contend with. In English society, even in Parliament, there were still people who believed in the Ten Commandments, and everywhere there remained ologies which had not received their elegies. Yet practical politics had lately opened out a vast range of novel thought. Eloquence had placed itself for once at the service of the people, and had opened the doors of the Indefinite. By the people he did not mean the aristocracy, nor the middle classes. To him, the man who could only make his mark on a polling paper, was more precious than a Solomon or a Socrates. The people were an unprejudiced body, free from ideas, on whose white soul the Dwindledown Society will inscribe the Message of the Future. [Tumultuous applause, amidst which Mr. Paul Starch sat down.]

The meeting shortly after dispersed, Miss Billiwinks first singing "O Tibbie! I have seen the Day," followed by Mrs. Wortleberry Sparkins, who gave "Robin was a Roving Boy" with much pathos.

Matthew Gregory Lewis.

A CURIOUS experiment was made in the spring of the year at one of the London theatres, when certain long-forgotten plays were revived, as it seemed, for the particular purpose of ridiculing them, and through them the men who wrote them, the players who played them, and the public who applauded. For some cause—the whole affair was so foolish that it is not worth while to inquire for what cause—the contemplated series of revivals came to a premature end. Two plays only were produced, the ‘George Barnwell’ of Lillo, and the ‘Castle Spectre’ of “Monk” Lewis. In a somewhat inconsequential explanation, or preface inserted in the playbill for the latter piece, it was pointed out that the author was the *first literary man of his time*, and that his play was accordingly a fair sample of the intellectual calibre of our forefathers—for the intention appeared to be, by a comparison of the theatrical entertainments of those days and these, to prove the incontestable superiority of the latter. Lewis was born in 1775, and died in 1818. He was therefore in a greater or less degree the contemporary of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Sheridan, Scott, Coleridge, Rogers, Moore, Campbell, Southey, Keats, Lamb, Landor, Hunt, Hazlitt, Jeffrey, Gifford, Godwin, Mackintosh—he lived, in short, at a time more profuse of great and various intellects than any other, perhaps, in the annals of English literature. Among these men, then, Lewis was the first! “Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee, thou art translated indeed!” And there were witnesses called for this somewhat remarkable assertion. Byron and Scott, we were told, had recorded their opinion of their famous contemporary. This, to be sure, is perfectly true. “He was a good man,” wrote the former, “a clever man; but a bore, a d—d bore: a man of many words; tedious, as well as contradictory to everything and everybody.” Scott confirms this criticism, with the addition that he was fonder of great people than he should have been, but allowing that he was a generous creature, and that his faults were only ridiculous. Truly, a little knowledge can become a dangerous thing. One must not, however, be too exacting in such matters. The widest licence is always allowed to a playbill: nor, indeed, would it be more in reason to expect literary knowledge or critical accuracy from an individual who is apparently proud to advertise himself as a “licensed dealer in short skirts and legs,” and to aver that the qualities necessary to ensure success in the management of a theatre are those only which

contribute to form a "successful cheesemonger," than it would be to demand from the latter a historical and geographical knowledge of the districts which supply his shop.*

Whatever, then, may have been the object with which this experiment was originally designed, the sole appreciable result has been to recall for a moment from the oblivion which has long been its portion, the name of a man who in his day acquired no inconsiderable measure of notoriety. It is possible that few, even among well-read people, entertain in these days more than a dim and uncertain idea of the author of 'The Monk,' nor, in truth, can this ignorance be made any just cause of reproach. Yet to clear up in some measure this uncertainty may, perhaps, be found no unpleasant nor unprofitable occupation for an idle hour.

Fortune was kind to Lewis in many ways, but in the matter of literary fame, for which it is probable he would have bartered all her other bounties, she was cruelly perverse. It is true he tasted in his time no small share of the sweets of popularity. His name was much in the mouths of men, still more, perhaps, of women, and he knew as well as most of his illustrious contemporaries what it was "to be pointed at by the finger." But that the fame he derived from 'The Monk' had in it a considerable mixture of baser element, even he, with all his affectation, can scarcely have been unconscious, though he may possibly have persuaded himself, as he tried to persuade his father, that he was an innocent sufferer in the cause of morality. His plays enjoyed but a very doubtful success, and even where successful with the galleries, were somewhat roughly handled by the critics. His 'Tales of Wonder,' despite the voluntary assistance of Scott and Southey, and the involuntary assistance of others on whose writings he, or someone for him, levied unscrupulous toll, made but little stir except of laughter. His best work, the 'Bravo of Venice,' is scarcely more than a translation from the German, though managed, it must be allowed, with considerable ingenuity and effect. His verses would hardly be accounted poetry even by an age that can tolerate the jingling imitations of 'Violet Fane,' or find a publisher for the childish babble of the author of the 'New Republic.' His writings were read, indeed, and if as much ridiculed as read, undoubtedly had in their day a share of popularity which must seem amazing to those who turn over their pages now without a previous understanding of the circumstances of the man and the time. "The pet and plaything of certain fashionable circles," as Lockhart contemptuously styled him in his lifetime, he basked in the sunshine of social

* See a collection of papers on various subjects, chiefly theatrical, written by the manager of the Gaiety Theatre, and entitled 'Plain English.' London: Chatto and Windus, 1880.

favour, but the crown of literary glory for which he sighed was placed only on his grave. Sixteen years after his death, "an injury," wrote one of the reviewers, "to the cause of the slaves and Lewis's reputation"—was published his 'Journal of a West Indian Proprietor,' composed during his first visit to his estates in Jamaica, and incomparably the best of all his works. The verdict that it entitled its author to be ranked with Washington Irving, with Miss Edgeworth, and even with Byron in his lighter letters from Ravenna,* is perhaps somewhat extravagant, yet there can be no question that it displays a real and unsuspected power in the delineation of scenery, incidents, and manners. It contains also some of his most graceful and flowing verses, for though no poet, Lewis could turn out pretty and melodious stanzas, as well as wild and grotesque ones, with wonderful facility. This time the critics were still more unanimous in their praise than they had previously been in their censure. Even the severest and most righteous of those arbiters of public taste, who had hitherto ignored the author of 'The Monk' in contemptuous silence, gave their approval ungrudgingly. "The impression of this posthumous work," wrote one from whom we have already quoted,† "should be such as to call forth from some quarter a distinct summary of the life of this very clever and amiable, though conceited and affected man." The seed bore fruit, though somewhat late. Five years afterwards a life of Lewis was given to the world, with copious extracts from his correspondence, and many pieces, both in prose and verse, then for the first time made public.‡ The work is not, indeed, a particularly brilliant specimen of biography, nor as a critical examination of the subject is it of much value; yet as the only substantial record of a man who, unlike most men, is but very slightly, if at all, to be comprehended from his writings, it is still not without interest. The public mind had strange ideas of Lewis. To them he was, as are so many writers, associated in some mysterious way with the hero of his first and principal work, and every subsequent production of his pen was in their eyes coloured with the same lurid and unwholesome tinge. To hundreds who had never read a line that he had written, he was, for many years of his life, the incarnation of all that was infamous, and every new work advertised from his pen was by these good souls condemned as impious and immoral before it had fairly found its way to the booksellers' counters. The nickname by which in his lifetime he was generally known, and for which perhaps alone he is remembered now, stands clearly in evidence: "Monk"

* 'Quarterly Review,' January 1834.

† Ibid.

‡ The 'Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis,' 2 vols. London: Henry Colburn, 1839.

Lewis he was christened in his twentieth year, and "Monk" Lewis he remained to the day of his death. Capricious and unreasoning as was this estimate of the man, he had none to blame save himself that it was so; but he was not, we suspect, greatly inclined to blame any one. From what may be learnt of his character, and from the record of a correspondence between his mother and himself on this subject,* there is little breach of charity in hazarding the suspicion that he was not in his heart much troubled at the reputation, however foreign his conduct may have been to the reality. Among his friends, and in society generally, he was popular despite his affectations, and what would in these days be termed his snobbishness: his spirits and his temper were even and gay, and in every company he was always ready to please and to be pleased. But few, even among his intimates, knew how much of good there was in that vain and fantastic nature, nor was it till he had been many years at rest in his ocean grave that the world realised their injustice, and learned with surprise that this profane and profligate monster was, in truth, one of the "mildest-mannered men" that ever existed, an affectionate and obedient son, just in all his dealings, of sober and cleanly life, cheerful, humane, and charitable.

Matthew Gregory Lewis was born in London on July 9th, 1775. Both his parents were of good family, and his father, at least, who at his son's birth was Deputy Secretary for War under Lord North, of some fortune. His mother was the youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Sewell, of Attershaw, Master of the Rolls to George III., and near Attershaw lay the estate of her husband Lewis, who was also possessed of considerable property in the West Indies. Married while little more than a girl, and launched suddenly from a country home into the glitter and whirl of the capital, Mrs. Lewis became a woman of fashion at an age when she would have been better suited with those simple pleasures and duties in whose performance Lady Teazle won the heart of her superannuated lord. Between her and her eldest son the closest affection ever existed, never on his side weakened by the petulance and caprice which she frequently exhibited even to him. But between her and her husband there was but little affinity. Vain, frivolous, fond of pleasure, and fond of admiration, though she had captivated the fancy she could not retain the esteem of a man much older than herself, and who, though generally just and sensible, was cold, reserved, and too much immersed in business to have either leisure or inclination for pleasure. The son was not ignorant of the breach that each day widened between his parents. He endeavoured to interfere, but the interference of so youthful a mediator could have but little weight, and

* 'Memoirs' vol. i., p. 185.

while he was still a boy at Westminster the inevitable separation came. Mrs. Lewis retired, in the first instance to France, but a close correspondence was all through the period of estrangement maintained between her and her eldest son—there were three other children, two girls, and a boy who died young—and even his early letters, while proving the affectionate and generous disposition of the writer, exhibit at the same time an amount of reason and common-sense but rarely found in one so young, and which few would perhaps have expected to find at any time in the author of ‘*The Monk*.’ Though his heart was with his mother, his duty to his father never wavered, and often he stood his champion against her ungenerous and unreasoning complaints; nor, while removing with affectionate assiduity the difficulties into which her extravagance or mismanagement so frequently brought her, did he ever fail to gently remind her that they were due at least to no illiberality on her husband’s side. Rarely has a son been called to play so difficult a part, and never has one so difficult been played with more conspicuous tact and consideration.

The only distinction Lewis appears to have won at Westminster was the distinction of being a clever actor. He seems, indeed, to have been born with a natural aptitude for the theatre, and one of his most intimate friends has recorded in enthusiastic terms his later triumphs upon the private stage, a favourite appanage to many of the great houses where Lewis visited, but which in those days was rightly regarded only as the private amusement of gentlemen, and had not become that public infliction to which it has now been pushed through the vanity of a few foolish persons. His mother, herself a musician of some skill, affected the society of musical and theatrical celebrities, and often the child would be put up before a select audience to recite passages from Shakespeare, sometimes even the effusions of his own childish muse. It is little wonder that this early training inspired Lewis not only with an ardent longing for literary renown, but also with a strong belief in his own powers. But it is curious, and may fairly stand as a further proof of the amiability of his temper, that this premature introduction to the delights of flattery never led him, as it has led other and greater minds, when the polite applause of friends gives way to the impartial criticism of the world, to attribute failure not to his own defects but to the envy and ignorance of his critics. A cynic might say that no critic could penetrate through that sevenfold shield of vanity, and vanity is, no doubt, a wondrous help and solace to the writer, successful or unsuccessful. But let the cause have been what it might, the fact stands that, though Lewis was in his day as finely abused as most men, he never retaliated on his critics, save in one instance,

only when, as we shall see, he combated the charge of systematic immorality. He seems to have written for the honest pleasure of writing, and by that merciful dispensation of Providence which forbids us to see ourselves as others see us, he was firmly persuaded that his work was worthy of the world's approbation. If the world disagreed with him, so much the worse for the world; but it was to be pitied for its ignorance, not abused for its spite.

From Westminster Lewis proceeded in his seventeenth year to Oxford. There, at Christ Church, he led for three years a happy, harmless life, if somewhat of an idle one for a university student. He busied himself as little as possible with the conventional studies of the place, and seems, indeed, even to have resided there as seldom as the discipline of those days would permit. Assigned by his father to the diplomatic service, and destined by Fortune to an independent future, a severe application to the Greek and Roman classics was as little necessary to him as it assuredly was little to his taste. Nature never designed Lewis for a scholar, and in turn he never attempted "to expel her with a fork." Yet he was not idle. His long vacations were spent abroad, one year at Paris, another at Weimar, where, besides enjoying himself as a young man of good position and means may, he applied himself assiduously to master the French and German languages. In the latter particularly he became a great proficient, and the ease with which at a later period he read off passages of 'Faust' to Byron considerably astonished the latter. At Weimar he made the acquaintance of Goethe: "Among other people to whom I have been introduced," he writes to his mother, "are the sister of Schweter, the composer, and M. de Goethe, the celebrated author of 'Werther,' so that you must not be surprised if I should shoot myself one of these fine mornings."

But wherever he was, in Paris, in Weimar, Oxford, or in the Highlands with Lord Douglas at Bothwell Castle, his busy pen scribbled on. "As to my own nonsense, I write and write," he tells his mother. That particular nonsense was a novel, two volumes of which were then written, but which was never destined to see the light, and to judge by certain extracts given in his biography Lewis evinced an unusual degree of judgment in consigning his 'Effusions of Sensibility' to an early grave. Besides this he had also in hand a romance, of which he probably made some use afterwards. "I have got hold of an infernal dying man who plagues my very heart out. He has talked for half a volume already, and seems likely to talk for half a volume more." So he complains to his mother from Weimar, and this unconscionable old man probably furnished the idea of Reginald in the 'Castle Spectre.' Then he had translated a French farce, and composed an original one, one of

which, apparently the former, was afterwards acted by Bannister for his benefit at Drury Lane, but on that occasion only. But the crowning glory of those days was his comedy of the 'East Indian,' which, after many vicissitudes, and hopes cruelly deferred, was played by Mrs. Jordan for her benefit, at the same theatre, and advanced to a place in the regular programme; many years after the author's death it came again upon the stage in the guise of a comic opera. Verses without end, chiefly of a sentimental cast, and some translations from the German, including a large part of Schiller's 'Minister,' complete the tale: a tolerably good budget, it will be allowed, so far as quantity may go, for any lad of seventeen.

Early in the summer of 1794 Lewis was appointed an attaché to the British Embassy at the Hague. He mixed freely in such society as the place could afford, finding Lord St. Helens, the English Minister, "excessively polite," the French society very charming, and the Dutch "insufferable." "Their assemblies," he imparts to his usual confidant, "are dreadful An unfortunate Irishman, *known by the name of Lord Kerry*, being the other night at one of them, and quite overcome with its stupidity, yawned so terribly that he fairly dislocated his jaw." He had, too, a taste of warfare and a sufficient taste, we may imagine, for a man of peace.

"I arrived at Arnheim two days before the evacuation of Nimeguen, and saw the bombardment of the bridge, which decided the giving up the town. The day after I went with Captain Clayton to a small village called Lent, in which one of our batteries was constructed, and against which the French cannon from Nimeguen were playing very briskly. Clayton, having to mount the battery, was obliged to get off his horse, which would have made him too conspicuous, and he gave it to me to hold. During his absence I saw two cannon-balls pass through the roof of a house about ten yards distant, one after another, and at length a ball passed through the house under the shelter of whose roof I was standing, and knocked all the tiles about my ears; so that you see my campaign has not been totally unattended with danger. As I was coming away from the village, I was much shocked at seeing a countryman whose leg had been shot away at that moment, as he was sitting at his cottage-door, and the same ball carried off the arm of his child, an infant of three years old, which he held upon his knee."

Still, neither his diplomatic duties, which were, perhaps, not onerous, nor the charming French, nor the insufferable Dutch, nor the stern realities of war, could wean him from his darling studies. The 'Mysteries of Udolpho,' which he recommended to his mother as "one of the most interesting books that has ever been published," spurred him on to fresh exertions. Towards the end of September he announces, with a natural show of pride, that he has written, within the space of ten weeks, "a romance of between three and four

hundred pages octavo," with which he is so much pleased, that if the booksellers will not buy it he shall publish it himself. This romance was the famous, or infamous, 'Monk.'

'Ambrosio; or the Monk' was published in the summer of 1795. "It is not too much to say," remarks Lewis's biographer with amusing solemnity, "that no writer of a maiden production ever obtained such rapid and extensive celebrity." Very few young writers have indeed ventured to subscribe their names to such an introduction to polite society. But Lewis did not anticipate, or affected not to anticipate, any opposition to his work. He was, as we have seen, greatly pleased with it himself, and not at all inclined to be ashamed of it. So forth it went into the world with the young author's name upon it, the name of a young man of good birth, position, and fortune, the son of a well-known and important official, and himself a servant of the Crown. It was little wonder, indeed, that society experienced the agreeable novelty of a sensation.

But the sensation was not altogether flattering to the cause. The reviewers were against him to a man, and reviewers were not in those days at pains to overlay their meaning with those smiling flowers of rhetoric which do such good service to the modern critic. What they had to say they said with a directness of speech there was no explaining away. In this case, however, they made one mistake. They declared the book to be indecent and profane, and they were right, but they did not declare it to be silly and dull. It was, therefore, as a matter of course, very widely read; for a book has only to be publicly condemned, on the first-named ground at least, to insure it, unless the law steps in, a large following of readers, if not of admirers. The law was, indeed, threatened. A rule *nisi* was obtained by one of the societies for the suppression of vice to restrain its sale, and the author entered no appearance to show cause against it. But the threat never blossomed into action, the rule was not made absolute, and the prosecution was suffered to drop. In a second edition, however, Lewis thought proper to expunge what he conceived to be the objectionable passages, a process of purification which can only lead a modern reader to wonder what may have been the author's definition of the term objectionable. At a later period he seems, indeed, to have become more alive to the nature of the work. In a remonstrance to his mother on a novel she designed to publish, or to write, for it is not clear how far she had proceeded with it, occurs the following curious passage:

"I am quite of your opinion when you say that it would be better for you as a woman to write dull sermons than 'The Monk,' *not merely on the score of delicacy*, but because a dull work will prevent its author being much talked about."

The spectacle of a son gravely suggesting to his mother that it would be better for her to write sermons than an indecent book, is one of the most curious in all the history of literature.

Yet Lewis, despite his real or assumed indifference, seems to have felt some qualms of conscience ; or possibly it may have been only to vindicate himself in the eyes of his family from a reproach for which he himself cared nothing, that he sent the following letter to his father :

February 23, 1798.

“MY DEAR FATHER,

“ Though certain that the clamours against ‘ The Monk ’ cannot have given you the smallest doubt of the rectitude of my intentions, or the purity of my principles, yet I am conscious that it must have grieved you to find any doubts on the subject existing in the minds of other people. To express my sorrow for having given you pain, is my motive for now addressing you, and also to assure you that you shall not feel that pain a second time on my account. Having made you feel it at all would be a sufficient reason, had I not others, to make me regret having published the first edition of ‘ The Monk,’ but I have others, weaker indeed, than the one mentioned, but yet sufficiently strong. I perceive that I have put too much confidence in the accuracy of my own judgment ; that, convinced of my object being unexceptionable, I did not sufficiently examine whether the means by which I attained that object were generally so, and that, upon many accounts, I have to accuse myself of high imprudence. Let me, however, observe that *twenty* is not the age at which prudence is most to be expected. Inexperience prevented my distinguishing what would give offence, but as soon as I found that offence was given, I made the only reparation in my power—I carefully revised the work, and expunged every syllable on which could be grounded the slightest construction of immorality. This, indeed, was no difficult task, for the objections rested entirely on expressions too strong, and words carelessly chosen ; not on the sentiments, characters, or general tendency of the work.

“ That the latter is undeserving censure, Addison will vouch for me ; the moral and outline of my story are taken from an allegory inserted by him in the *Guardian*, and which he commends highly for ability of invention and propriety of object. Unluckily, in working it up, I thought that the stronger my colours, the more effect would my picture produce, and it never struck me that the exhibition of Vice in her temporary triumph might possibly do as much harm as her final exposure and punishment would do good. To do much good, indeed, was more than I expected of my book ; having always believed that our conduct depends on our own hearts and characters, not upon the books we read, or the sentiments we hear. But though I did not expect much benefit to arise from the perusal of a trifling romance, written by a youth of twenty, I was in my own mind quite certain that no harm could be produced by a work whose subject was furnished by one of our best moralists, and in the composition of which I did not introduce a single incident, or a single character, without meaning to inculcate some maxim universally allowed. It was then with infinite surprise that I heard the outcry raised against the book, and found that a few ill-judged and unguarded passages totally obscured its general tendency. . . . I can now do no more than say that neither in this, nor any

other part of 'The Monk,' had I the slightest idea that what I was then writing could injure the principles, moral or religious, of any human being. Since this work I have published others, and, taught by experience, I have avoided the insertion of any word that could possibly admit of misrepresentation. As their propriety has not been questioned, I trust that I have succeeded in the attempt, and I do not despair of some time or other convincing my censors that they have totally mistaken both me and my principles. Those principles I need not justify to you, my dear father; I need only again request your pardon for the uneasiness which this business has given you, and beg you to believe me, your most affectionate son,

" M. G. LEWIS."

This is all very well. The cant of good intentions, of exposing Vice in her own image, and of doing generally what only prudes can consider evil that good may come, has been in every age, and under every system of manners, the cant of the writer who is taken to task for a wilful offence against propriety. It was the cant of Congreve when Collier arraigned him and his fellows for the grossness of their plays; it is the cant of certain writers in the present day who, with all Congreve's grossness, have none of Congreve's wit. That Lewis offended more through carelessness than through any real lack of moral sense may perhaps be allowed, but he must have known, had his years numbered even less than they did, that no ultimate purity of design could have excused the shameless impropriety of many of his scenes; while for the design, his own words to his father show how little weight he was really and justly inclined to attach to that. Nor it is possible to avoid the suspicion that in laying on his colours as strongly as he did, he had an eye rather to the sensuous charms of his picture than the moral lesson it might convey. He was young, in short; he wished to write a book that would be talked about, and having no original material of his own to work with, he employed that which is unfortunately common to all human nature, and which has had in all ages but too powerful attractions for a large class of readers. His attempt to shield himself behind the spotless fame of Addison is the most disingenuous part of his apology. That the outline of his novel may have been suggested by the story of the Santon Barsisa in the *Guardian* is possible; but that story he might have known is not to be found in Addison's writings; nor, were his statement correct, would the matter be much mended. As well, indeed, might the author of that shameless and disgusting book 'L'Assommoir' excuse himself on the ground that his pretended exposition of the degrading effects of drink are suggested by the story of Noah.

Yet it would be, perhaps, incorrect to say that the improprieties of 'The Monk' were its only passport to fame. At the time of its appearance English literature was at its lowest ebb. Cowper was

dead, Scott had not yet arisen. Coleridge and Wordsworth were unknown, or known only to ridicule. The great masters of fiction had passed away, and left none to fill their place; Hayley in poetry, and Mrs. Radcliffe in prose, were the twin stars of that murky firmament. The mawkish sentimentalities and morbid horrors of the German school were in the ascendant, for, as is the wont of all copyists who have no master-hand to guide them, it was to the worst features of that school that its English imitators turned. Mr. Hayward, in his recent work on Goethe,* quotes the following passage from an article in the 'Edinburgh Review' for June 1816 on the three first parts of 'Dichtung und Wahrheit:'

"The astonishing rapidity of the development of German literature has been the principal cause both of its imperfections and of the enthusiasm of its warmest admirers. About five and twenty, or thirty years ago (1786-1791), all we knew about Germany was, that it was a vast tract of country, overrun with hussars and classical editors, and that if you went there you would see a great tun at Heidelberg, and be regaled with excellent old hock and Westphalia hams; the taste for which good things was so predominant as to preclude the slightest approach to poetical grace or enthusiasm. At that time we had never seen a German name affixed to any other species of writing than a treaty by which some Serene Highness or another had sold so many head of soldiers for American consumption, or to a formidable apparatus of critical annotation teeming with word-catching and Billingsgate in Latin and Greek."

The article was written by Jeffrey himself, and written, as Mr. Hayward complains, with the express purpose of holding up Goethe and his works to ridicule. "The writer had obviously never heard of Klopstock, Herder, Wieland, Winckelman, Lessing or Kant;" but Mr. Hayward seems strangely to have misinterpreted Jeffrey's true meaning. How many educated Englishmen in the latter quarter of the last century—the time, be it remembered, that Jeffrey specifies, the time of his birth, not the time, as Mr. Hayward seems to think, at which the offending article was written—how many, we say, had at that period heard of the sages Mr. Hayward enumerates? Very few, we suspect; and much fewer, we suspect, have any degree of intimacy with them now than so accomplished a German as Mr. Hayward would be willing to believe. Even Mr. Carlyle has done less to familiarise Englishmen with German literature than he hoped, less perhaps than he knows. The name of Goethe, indeed, is familiar enough on our lips, and thanks to the late Mr. Lewis, and to Mr. Hayward himself, it is tolerably well known what manner of man he was. He is spoken of in England with all reverence, and is perhaps the only foreigner whom Englishmen will allow to wear his hat in

* 'Foreign Classics for English Readers:' "Goethe," by A. Hayward. William Blackwood and Sons, 1878.

the presence of Shakespeare; but yet how many of our countrymen know much more of 'Faust' than the Italian Opera has taught them? Let us hear what Scott has to say on the subject.*

"As far back as 1788, a new species of literature began to be introduced into this country. Germany, long known as a powerful branch of the European confederacy, was then for the first time heard of as the cradle of a style of poetry and literature, of a kind much more analogous to that of Britain, than either the French, Spanish, or Italian schools, though all three had at various times been cultivated and imitated among us. The names of Lessing, Klopstock, Schiller, and other German poets of eminence were only known in Britain very imperfectly. 'The Sorrows of Werther,' was the only composition that had attained any degree of popularity, and the success of that remarkable novel, notwithstanding the distinguished genius of the author, was retarded by the nature of its incidents. To the other compositions of Goethe, whose talents were destined to illuminate the age in which he flourished, the English remained strangers, and much more so to Schiller, Bürger, and a whole cycle of foreigners of distinguished merit."

Had Mr. Hayward remembered this passage he would, we think, have been less quick to condemn Jeffrey, who was, in fact, perfectly correct in his statements, though his words may take some colour of extravagance from the tone of contempt he designedly employed. That design was not to ridicule Goethe, but to ridicule his ridiculous imitators. Even Mr. Hayward is forced to confess that, stripped of the charm of Goethe's style, and the artistic elegance of his method, there is much in such a work as that we style 'The Sorrows of Werther'† to offer fair game to the scorner. It was a translation, and a very vile translation, of this book that first introduced Goethe to the English public, who hailed with delight a style of writing that hit their tastes so nicely. For sentiment was then high in fashion, and we must dare to take issue with Scott when he asserts that the success of Goethe's work was retarded by the nature of its incidents. The sorrows of his hero pleased no whit the less because they were expended on an improper object. We question whether Richardson, despite the manlier and more English genius of Fielding and Smollett, was not still the better favourite with the multitude. For with the idle, or with those into whose lives no element of real misfortune or sorrow enters, tears ever have had, and ever will have, a charm superior to laughter. With an immense number of people, even of an age and condition to dissuade them from

* 'Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad.'

† "Even the title is mistranslated," writes Mr. Hayward of a very bad translation of this work which appeared in 1801. "It should be the 'Sufferings of Young Werther.'" This is surely something of a distinction without a difference.

so vain a pleasure, nothing is so "dainty sweet as lovely melancholy." Many, too, of real taste and discernment, were, or affected to be, disgusted by the coarseness of Richardson's great rival, and assumed a patrician contempt at the vulgarity, as they called it, of his scenes, and the lowness of his characters. But those who attempted to walk in the footsteps of Richardson, while missing his good qualities, exaggerated his bad a hundredfold. With them feeling degenerated into sentiment, and the scenes for which, according to a modern taste, the author of 'Pamela' has earned some of the censure bestowed on the author of 'Tom Jones,' were copied with a less correct pencil, and filled in with a fuller brush and bolder colour. It is the province of genius to stir the feelings, but the poorest intelligence can inflame the imagination. The open coarseness of Fielding and Smollett was avoided with a nice affectation of prudery, but in its stead grew up a viciousness, shrouded indeed in the loose vest of sentimentalism, but not on that account less offensive, and perhaps on that account more pernicious, while wholly unredeemed by the strong, pure style, manly sense, and natural touch, which have raised 'Tom Jones' and 'Roderick Random' to the dignity of English classics. Our writers of fiction copied no longer from nature, but from models whose faults they aggravated and to whose virtues they were insensible. Affecting the strictest principles of morality, they professed to inculcate virtue by presenting vice in its most alluring and dangerous shape, taking as their motto Pope's famous maxim:

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen,"

than which, as Lewis's biographer justly remarks, no maxim was ever more hazardous in the application. Their readers, indeed, troubled their heads little what the moral might be if only the form in which it was conveyed was to their taste. "The professed moral of a piece," as Scott shrewdly observes, "is usually what the reader is least interested in; it is like the mendicant who cripples after some splendid and gay procession, and in vain solicits the attention of those who have been gazing upon it." * But here was the danger that the splendour of those processions would grow dull, the gaiety monotonous. The old materials were worked out, and it was not in the power of those who arrayed the tawdry pageant to invent new ones. At this moment Werther came upon the scene, and was hailed as a veritable godsend. All eyes were turned to the land of his birth. The mine of German fiction thus opened was worked with a will, and after the same blind and unreasoning method. All the worst extravagances of

* Scott's 'Lives of Novelists and Dramatists:' "Henry Fielding."

an extravagant school were let loose upon an astonished and soon enraptured public.

"Tales of the most thrilling horror and extravagant improbability were imported from the land of metaphysics and misanthropy; through whose pages demons stalked, shrouded in mystery, and dealt around despair without the smallest remorse or mitigation of conscience. Disappointed lovers were made to rack their invention upon the most appalling expedients for ending their woes; till the dreams of dyspeptic lunacy could no further go. The quiet pictures of domestic life, and the less hurtful details of smaller vices were no longer considered as sufficiently stimulating. Violent contrast, unnatural incident, and unheard-of crimes were only to be tolerated. A tale which appealed to the reason was considered dull and prosy; the passions must be roused, and the universal cry was for excitement."*

Mrs. Radcliffe, the Robespierre of that age of literary terror, never, indeed, gave way to the prevailing taste, or, at least, to the worse side of it. There was mystery and gloom enough in her pages, and even a fair proportion of horror, but she was never vicious even by implication, and though posterity has declined to ratify the enthusiasm of her contemporaries, and shakes its head even at the more qualified praise of Scott, it cannot refuse her the praise of being, if not the best, the purest of her school. From the 'Mysteries of Udolpho' directly sprang 'The Monk.' But with Lewis it was the old story again and in an exaggerated form. He copied everywhere,† and, unlike the Greek sculptor who selected the particular beauties of each beautiful woman he could find to make one matchless Helen, he selected the worst points of every model, and reproduced them with all the faults that an immature judgment, an imperfect education, and a lively but perverted fancy could supply. With a diseased taste "who peppers the highest is surest to please," and no one, or no one at least of such name and position as Lewis, had ever peppered quite so freely before. The praise bestowed upon the work by men of real genius may seem at first less easy to explain. Yet even genius will sometimes go with the stream, nor is the capacity for producing work of the highest order always allied with the capacity for judging the

* 'Memoirs of Lewis,' vol. i., p. 172.

† In the 'Monthly Review' for August, 1797, will be found an amusing list of Lewis's plagiarisms. "The outline of the story was suggested by that of the Santon Barsisa in the *Guardian*; the form of temptation is borrowed from the 'Devil in Love of Cazotte' (also, one might have said, from the familiar legend of St. Anthony); the catastrophe is taken from the 'Sorcerer.' In the 'Adventures of Raymond and Agnes' the forest scene is borrowed from Smollett's 'Count Fathom'; the 'Bleeding Nun' is a popular German tale, and the convent-prison resembles the inflictions of Mrs. Radcliffe."

work of others. The two names which are most commonly cited among the admirers of 'The Monk' are those of Byron and Shelley. But the criticisms of the former are notoriously among the very worst expressions of that great intellect, while the bold defiance of so young a man to the laws of decorum and morality were certain to enlist the sympathies of Byron no less than of Shelley. In the few fragments of fiction that remain among the latter's work, may be traced a strong affinity to the school which produced 'The Monk.' But we have lingered long enough over a worthless subject.

To employ a familiar phrase, Lewis awoke on the publication of his novel to find himself famous. His course of life was now determined. He decided to abandon diplomacy and devote himself entirely to the Muses. On coming of age in the following year he did, indeed, take his seat in Parliament, succeeding the famous Beckford in the representation of Hendon in Wiltshire. Through whose influence he entered the House, or on what grounds, is not stated by his biographer. But in those days, and, perhaps, it may be thought, in these, no very particular qualifications were considered necessary for a member of Parliament, and any young man of birth and means, who had rendered himself in any way conspicuous, found little difficulty in gratifying his ambition for senatorial honours. But Lewis, if such an ambition was ever more with him than a momentary ebullition of vanity, was soon tired of his new toy. He never attempted to speak; his attendance soon became irregular; and after a few sessions he wisely retired into a more congenial atmosphere. But of his pen he never tired. Amid all the distractions and amusements of society, in which he now began to be a familiar figure, he still continued to read and write with unabated ardour, and would often escape from the "*fumum strepitumque Romæ*" to a little cottage he had hired at Barnes, where he could pursue his studies at leisure. His father viewed the change with disfavour, but made no open opposition, nor did he till a later period, and for a different reason, withdraw from the young author the liberal allowance he had settled on the young diplomatist.

In the year following 'The Monk,' the 'Castle Spectre' was brought out at Drury Lane. It is said that Lewis first submitted the manuscript to his sister,* that she might expunge all such passages as appeared to her to offend either against religion or decorum. What labour this delicate office entailed we are not told, but if the lady's criticism extended to offences against literary as well as moral propriety, it is clear her office can have been no sinecure. The play, however, was successful: it "ran," as the saying is, for sixty nights,

* Married to Sir Henry Lushington, of Aspenden Hall, Herts.

and kept its place upon the stage up to a period within the memory of men still living. To Sheridan, indeed, who was then manager of Drury Lane, it proved for a time a very mine of gold. Every one remembers the story of the dispute between him and Lewis, which the latter offered to clench by betting all that his play had brought into the manager's exchequer. "No, no," was the answer, "that is too large a sum to risk on such a trifle; but I will bet you what it is worth." No better proof, were proof required, could be given of the estimation in which all men of sense held this remarkable work, and of the absurdity of the argument which attempted to establish from the success of such a monstrous tissue of nonsense the intellectual inferiority of our forefathers! The piece was popular then, as vulgar burlesques and mawkish parodies of French comedies are popular now. Many years, centuries, indeed, have passed since any sensible person would have thought of seeking in the theatre a standard of the intellectual power of the time. It is impossible to imagine a more awful doom for this generation than for some future historian to gauge the quality of its intelligence by the plays in vogue in the majority of our theatres. Only the most audacious effrontery, or an ignorance still more audacious, could venture on such a theory, or affect to point to the author of the 'Castle Spectre' as the representative of a time which in the variety and splendour of its genius can vie with the golden ages of Elizabeth and Anne. So fearful, indeed, of the result was Sheridan, whose own high genius and correct taste could not fathom the dark profound of the popular mind, that he implored Lewis to "keep the spectre out of the last scene." Lewis refused, and, as events proved, very wisely refused. "Never," he wrote in the preface to the published edition of the play.

"was any poor *soul* so ill-used as Evelina's, previous to presenting herself before the audience. The friends to whom I read my drama, the manager to whom I presented it, and the actors who were to perform in it, all combined to persecute my 'spectre,' and requested me to confine my ghost to the green-room. Aware that without her, my catastrophe would closely resemble that of the 'Grecian Daughter,' I resolved upon retaining her. The event justified my obstinacy. The 'spectre' was as well treated before the curtain as she had been ill-used behind it; and, as she continues to make her appearance nightly with increased applause, I think myself under great obligations to her and her representative."

The 'Castle Spectre' was by far the most fortunate of all Lewis's plays. Indeed, with the exception of an equestrian piece known as 'Timour the Tartar,' designed for Covent Garden to eclipse the glories of 'Bluebeard' at the rival house, and the comedy of 'The East Indian,' his success as a dramatist was less remarkable than

his perseverance. An opera called 'Adelmorn the Outlaw,' despite Kelly's music, and the acting of Charles Kemble and Mrs. Jordan, never obtained any hold on the public fancy. 'Alfonso, King of Castile,' a tragedy in blank verse, fell still more flat, though the cast was a good one, including George Frederick Cooke, and the author himself allowed that the acting could not well have been better. In his preface to this, the most ambitious of all his works, Lewis, for the only time in his life so far as we know, made an appeal to his critics.

"To the assertion that my play is stupid," he wrote, "I have nothing to object; if it be found so, even so let it be said. But if, as was most falsely asserted of 'Adelmorn,' any anonymous writer should advance that my tragedy is immoral, I expect him to prove his assertions by quoting the objectionable passages."

Whether the objections thus anticipated were ever made, or, if made, were made in the form prescribed, we cannot say; but his biographer is careful to specify it as the most moral of all his works. We should be sorry to recommend any of our readers to judge for themselves, not out of regard for their morals, for there is really very little harm in the play, but out of regard for their time and patience. If curious on the subject, however, they will find in one of the early numbers of the 'Edinburgh Review' * a very amusing article on it, which has also the advantage of being very short, from no less sharp a pen than that of Sydney Smith himself.

"We confess," is the critic's comment on the author's assertion of innocence, "we have been highly delighted with these symptoms of returning, or perhaps nascent purity in the mind of Mr. Lewis, a delight somewhat impaired, to be sure, at the opening of the play by the following explanation which Ottila gives of her early rising."

He then proceeds to quote the lines in question, which are certainly written in what it was once the fashion to term a glowing style, nor will the critic's brief summary of the early scenes tend perhaps to reassure any very modest person who may desire to study for himself the adventures of Alfonso, King of Castile. It is allowed, however, that "all is not so bad in this play." "There is some good poetry scattered up and down, and some strong painting which shows every now and then the hand of a master." This is Sydney Smith's opinion, and we regret we are compelled to disagree with so eminent a writer, though we do most thoroughly agree with his explanation of the ill-success which it experienced on the stage, the want of nature in the characters, and of probability and good arrangement in the incidents—objections, as he drily remarks, of some force.

* For 1803.

But to go seriatim through all Lewis's plays would be sheer waste of time. The most that can be said of them is that they show a fair amount of what is technically known as knowledge of the stage. Moore, writing when Lewis was at the height of his theatrical reputation, to a friend minded to try his fortune as a dramatist, recommends Lewis as likely to be of great service to him. "No one," he says, "knows the inside of a theatre so well as Lewis." It is obvious, however, that to "know the inside of a theatre" is not the only knowledge necessary for a writer of plays, though there is, indeed, a certain class of theatrical entertainments where, next to the skill of the carpenter, the scene-painter, and the dressmaker, it is perhaps the most important element of success. In originality, in characterisation, in the nature of his incidents, and the propriety of his language, Lewis was as deficient as any farce-writer of the present day. Had he not been, in short, the man he was—of good birth, of good position, of independent means, and notorious as the author of 'The Monk'—it is very doubtful whether any work of his would ever have advanced beyond the manager's room. His tragedy of 'Alfonso' was acted, not at Drury Lane, but at Covent Garden, owing to some quarrel with Sheridan; and in a letter written to his mother, a few days after the first performance, occurs the following passage:

"For what reason I know not, but Mr. Harris (the manager of Covent Garden) has taken all of a sudden a fancy for everything that I do. . . . 'Anything that you choose to be brought forward,' said he, 'shall be produced immediately.'"

Precisely so; and it is pretty much the same, we fancy, at the present day. Were Shakespeare's self, under a different name, to re-visit these glimpses of the moon with another Othello, we would back a philosophical comedy by Mr. Bradlaugh to take the stage against it. There is more virtue in a name than Juliet dreamed of.

Lewis, however, was supremely happy, and seems really to have satisfied himself that his plays were very fine works. His notions of failure and success, to judge by the letters to his mother, appear moreover to have been somewhat confused, unless we are to suppose he was desirous of sparing her a painful knowledge which a glance at the first newspaper would have been sufficient to dispel. But whether clapped or damned mattered little to his equal mind. He continued to pour out a never-ebbing stream: tragedies, comedies, operas, farces, novels, satires, love songs, ballads, political squibs, much as, to employ an ingenious simile once irreverently applied to a distinguished novelist, the grand Llama of Thibet grinds

out prayers. Nor, despite his literary labours, did he neglect the lighter relaxations of society. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that, by the men at least, he was as much laughed at as caressed; but it is certain that he was a favoured guest at many great houses, and graciously received by royalty itself. The Duchess of York visited him at his cottage at Barnes, and the description by a friend of the entertainment made in her honour, and particularly of the host's own condition and behaviour on that memorable day, conveys as good an idea of the man as any other passage in the book.* He was often, too, at Oatlands, and of one of his visits there Byron somewhere tells the following anecdote. Being observed one morning with his eyes red and a very sentimental air, he was asked what was the matter. When people said anything kind to him, he answered, it affected him deeply, "and just now the duchess has said something so kind to me that——" here the tears began to flow. "Never mind, Lewis," said one of the guests to him, "never mind; don't cry; *she could not mean it.*" He was, in truth, a character to which the author of the 'Book of Snobs' would have assigned a prominent place in his gallery of portraits. Scott, the least ill-natured, surely, of all men, and who, indeed, has paid many high compliments to Lewis's talents, thus describes him:

"He was fonder of great people than he ought to have been, either as a man of talent, or a man of fashion. He had always dukes and duchesses in his mouth, and was pathetically fond of any one that had a title. You would have sworn that he had been a parvenu of yesterday, yet he had lived all his life in good society."

Among the great houses which Lewis visited was Inverary, where he used to pass a portion of every autumn, and where he was very popular for his good temper and skill in providing amusements for the company. It was through a relation of the family of Campbell, the Lady Charlotte Bury, that he first made the acquaintance of Scott, who owed, as he has declared, to this introduction his first plunge into poetry. Moore repeats the story, adding that Scott had passed the earlier part of his life with a set of "clever, rattling, drinking fellows," whose thoughts and talents lay wholly out of the region of poetry, for which, had it not been for Lewis, he might never have discovered his taste. This is, perhaps, making too much of the matter, for Scott had made his plunge before he met Lewis. His translations, or imitations, as he preferred to call them, of the 'Lenoré' and 'Der Wilde Jäger' of Bürger, had been published in Edinburgh in 1796, but attracted little notice, owing, in a great measure, to the number of translations from the same source which

* 'Memoirs,' vol. i., p. 334, *et seq.*

had appeared about the same time in England, including an admirable one of the first-named ballad by Mr. William Taylor of Norwich. It was in the autumn of 1801 that Scott and Lewis first became friends; and it is curious to read how, thirty years afterwards, when the great novelist had drunk the cup of fame to the dregs, he could still tell Allan Cunningham that he had never felt such rapture as when the "Monk" invited him to dinner at his hotel.* Lewis was then projecting his 'Tales of Wonder,' to which Scott gladly agreed to contribute, and in this collection the fine ballads of "Glenfinlass," the "Eve of St. John," and the "Fire King" made their first appearance. Captain Medwin has made Byron declare the greater part of the last-named of the three to have been written by Lewis himself, who, according to the same authority, was in the habit of correcting Scott's verses for him,† two imputations which the latter naturally took the first opportunity of very distinctly refuting.‡ At the same time he allowed that he owed much to Lewis's criticisms, which appear to have been chiefly directed to false rhymes, defective rhythm, and the like; and certainly, if we may judge by the necessity for many of the corrections, there must have been some truth in the statement put by Medwin into Byron's mouth that Scott, when he first began to write poetry, understood but little of the mechanical part of his art.§ Though Scott, as his own judgment widened, found cause to moderate his early opinion of Lewis's talents, he always spoke with admiration of his ear for rhyme and rhythm, which he declared to be more delicate even than Byron's, a comparison which would we fear in Mr. Swinburne's estimation be of little more value than that of the luckless critic who excited Macaulay's wrath by avowing the first oration of the elder Pitt to have been more ornamented than the speeches of Demosthenes, less diffuse than those of Cicero. The 'Tales' were, however, a failure, despite Scott's assistance, and Southey's, who contributed "The Old Woman of Berkeley," and some other pieces of the same class, to say nothing of Lewis's own contributions, the best of which was the ballad of "Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogen," perhaps the only one of the author's works which has survived to this day. The public were aghast at the audacity with which the publisher—without Lewis's knowledge, Scott says—had swelled the collection into two expensive volumes by the insertion of some of the most familiar pieces in English poetry: Dryden's 'Theodore and Honoria,' and Parnell's 'Hermit' among the number. Some wicked wit

* Lockhart's 'Life of Scott.'

† 'Account of some passages in Lord Byron's later years.'

‡ Note D., Appendix to 'Imitations of Ancient Ballads.'

§ Ibid.

christened the work "Tales of Plunder;" the reviewers attacked it to a man, and it was soon "laughed into Lethe."

With the exception of 'Alonzo,' Lewis's poetry has long ago gone the way of his prose, nor is it probable that the present generation know very much more than two lines in the once famous history of the knight and his perjured mistress. Of the one, indeed, as of the other, the same may be said, that the world never got the best till the writer was in his grave. Incomparably the best specimens of his muse are to be found in the posthumous 'Journal.' His romantic verses are as tawdry and bombastic as his drama, while those on more domestic subjects not infrequently deserve the criticism which in the same generation was passed on a little volume of poems put forth by Charles Lamb and his friend Lloyd, of being so familiar as scarcely to be verse at all. Such fame as they had can be attributed only to the general barrenness of contemporary literature, and to the name their author bore. Many of the pieces which made their first appearance in these 'Memoirs' were written merely for the hour, at the request of some friends, to celebrate some domestic incident, or record some passing sentiment. Even as such they cannot take very high rank, while, if, as we are told, his humorous stanzas were the delight of his intimates, we can only say that, like the friends of Mr. Peter Magnus, his intimates must have been very easily amused. In short, it is difficult to determine on what grounds Lewis could ever have made even the figure he did in the world of letters, save on those we have mentioned. Yet those, indeed, as the history of letters teaches us, are grounds of some substance, and it would not, perhaps, in our own time be difficult to find more than one instance of talents no higher than Lewis's elevated into temporary splendour by the pious enthusiasm of friends.

The death of his father, which happened somewhere about 1812-13,* left Lewis in sole possession of a comfortable fortune. There had existed for some years previously an unhappy estrangement between the pair, in consequence of an intimacy the father had formed with a lady of good position in society, whom he required his son to receive as an acknowledged friend of the family. This the latter very properly conceived his respect and affection for his mother would not permit, and though his refusal was conveyed in all humility, nor did he ever on his part suffer the matter to interfere with his notions of filial duty, the resentment of his father, artfully fanned by the malice of the intruder, drove him for a time from his home. All attempts at reconciliation were for a long time thwarted by the same designing

* No date is given in the 'Memoirs,' which are often sadly deficient in this necessary element of biography.

spirit, nor was it till the father lay on his death-bed that peace was made. It was, perhaps, to make some atonement to a son who had always shown himself, in circumstances of peculiar delicacy, affectionate, dutiful, and forgiving, that, with the exception of some legacies to the original offender, he left him everything he had to leave.

The change in Lewis's circumstances made, however, no immediate change in his life. He still continued to pass his time between his chambers in the Albany, his cottage at Barnes, and the houses of his friends. His charities were largely increased, and his mother made comfortable with a handsome income for life. One of the results of his father's estrangement had been the diminution of his allowance, which had compelled him, sorely against his will, to be less lavish with his purse, and for this enforced economy he now made ample amends. His biographer relates many pleasing instances of his charity, which seems, moreover, to have been as discriminating as it was generous. Nor had vanity any share in his benevolence. Like "humble Allen," he delighted to do good by stealth, and the only condition ever pressed upon the recipients of his bounty was that the name of their benefactor should be concealed. It is to Lewis's private character rather than to his literary work that we must turn for any claim on our respect, and it really seems little exaggeration to say of him that he was, allowing for a few harmless weaknesses, as good a man as he was a bad writer, which all who have made his acquaintance in the latter capacity will allow to be very high praise indeed. Charles Greville, to be sure, rates his character at a much lower estimate, and brings some members of his family to support the estimation; but Greville, we know, had a rare faculty in discovering the worse side of human nature.

In 1815 Lewis put into execution a project which he had long contemplated. By his father's death he had come, as we have seen, into possession of an estate in Jamaica, and he now determined on a visit to his property to satisfy himself by personal investigation of the condition of his slaves—a topic which was then occupying a large share of attention in England through the untiring exertions of a small band of philanthropists, of whom Wilberforce, and his friend Zachary Macaulay, were the prominent figures. He slipped off very quietly, in order, as he writes to his mother, with a somewhat superfluous force of language, to spare each other the "unnecessary agony of leave-taking" for a few months. He sailed from England on November 10, 1815, and landed in Jamaica on the first day of the new year.

He remained there four months, and during that time devoted himself with such solicitude to the object of his visit, that he came to

be regarded by all the negroes on the island as their champion and intercessor, somewhat, as we may imagine, to the annoyance of the other proprietors. His conduct, however, seems in general to have been marked, despite Moore's sneer,* with good sense and moderation, if not always calculated to advance his own proprietary interests, and where he erred on the side of indulgence, it was rather through his own innate kindness of heart than from a wrong perception of character or facts. Before his departure he drew up a code of laws for the management of his own estate, in which the use of the lash was entirely forbidden. The writer in the 'Quarterly,' from whom we have already quoted, opines that if all the West India proprietors had behaved as he did, "not all the fanatics, backed by all the Liberals, and all the East India sugar-dealers, would have consummated their ruin"—an opinion which many now living would, we imagine, be particularly pleased to have seen established by fact.

Back again in England, Lewis allowed himself but a short rest before setting out for the Continent, in pursuance of a long-cherished design of paying a visit to Byron in his illustrious and self-appointed exile. He found his friend at Geneva, in the society of the Shelleys, and there he passed some weeks before continuing his tour across the Alps to Milan, Florence, Rome, and Naples. This part of his career is but briefly noticed by his biographer, and it is much to be regretted that Byron has not left, or Moore has not recorded, some memorials of a visit which, despite the former's quoted opinion of Lewis, must have been rich in interest to posterity. The only register of that time the 'Memoirs' vouchsafe is a codicil to Lewis's will, entailing, with such strictness as he and his friends could devise, certain conditions on his heir with regard to the future of his West Indian estates—conditions which, it appears, were afterwards challenged and set aside by the law-courts. The document, which is dated from the Maison Diodati, August 20, 1816, was witnessed by Byron, Shelley, and Polidori. Lewis returned to England in the close of the following summer, and, after another short sojourn, sailed again for Jamaica in the October of the same year.

His second visit was, according to his own statement, eminently satisfactory, in showing the good results of the first. From his overseer he received the best accounts of the conduct of his negroes, who, he declared, worked twice as hard under his new and gentler regulations than on any other estate where the old laws were still in force. On May 4, 1818, he sailed once more for England.

He was ill when he went on board, having for some days previously

* "He was ruining his negroes in Jamaica, they say, by indulgence, for which they suffered severely so soon as his back was turned."—Moore's 'Diary.'

been suffering from a slight attack of yellow fever. As the voyage proceeded he grew worse, and a strong emetic, imprudently administered at his own desire, hastened the end. Early in the morning of May 14 he died, and his body was committed, with all decency, but necessarily with all haste, to the waves of the Gulf of Florida. "Few men," wrote Moore in his 'Diary,' "once so talked of have ever produced so little sensation by their death;" and Byron, in his 'Notes to English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' bears additional record that "Monk Lewis had outlived his reputation." It would be more charitable to think that he had outlived a reputation of which the larger and clearer sight of manhood had made him justly ashamed, and that he would, had he been spared, have obliterated by an old age of sobriety and benevolence the literary follies and excesses of his youth.

With the exception of the 'Journal,' which it seems doubtful that he designed for publication, his literary career may be said to have terminated with his father's death. Nothing bearing his name was issued from the press after 1812. He did not, however, wholly abandon poetical composition, and a short time previous to his second departure from England he presented a friend with a copy of verses entitled 'The Angel of Mercy,' so obviously suggested from 'Lallah Rookh' as to preclude, even in his not too fastidious mind, all idea of publication. Of the verses interspersed in his 'Journal' we have already spoken. There is among them a little poem called "The Hours," which for graceful fancy (if it be not borrowed) and melodious diction far exceeds all the combined effusions of his muse. The 'Journal' itself, which was nursed into the world by Charles Greville, will well repay perusal even now. It must always stand high among works of a similar class for lightness, pleasantry, descriptive power, and felicity of expression, and fairly justifies the assertion of its reviewer, that had he in his mature age undertaken a novel of manners, it would have cast immeasurably into the shade even the happiest efforts of his boyish romance.

The Reverend Father Gaucher's Elixir.

BY ALPHONSE DAUDET.

“DRINK a draught of this, my friend, and tell me what you think of it.”

The Curé of Graveson began carefully, as a lapidary counts his pearls, to pour out, drop by drop, thimblefuls of a “liqueur” of a golden green colour, sparkling and most delicious. My blood was all aglow after this delicious draught.

“This drink is Father Gaucher's elixir; it is the joy and health of the whole country of Provence,” continued the honest fellow triumphantly. “It is made in the monastery of the Prémontrés; it is worth all the Chartreuses in the world. And if you only knew how entertaining the story of this elixir is! . . . Listen, I will tell it to you.”

Accordingly he began in the most simple manner—in the dining-room of the rectory, which was so modest, and calm, and adorned with the whole history of the Cross and with curtains starched out like surplices—to tell me the story, which was somewhat irreverent and sceptical, and rather in the Erasmus, or d'Assomy's style:—

Twenty years ago, the order of the Prémontrés, or I should perhaps call them the White Fathers, for they were always termed so amongst the Provençaux, were in great poverty and misery. If you had seen their monastery at that time you would have been quite sorry for them. The high wall and the Pacôme tower were falling to pieces; grass growing all round the monastery; the pillars splitting; the stone saints were topsy-turvy in their nooks; there was not a window or a door in decent order. The breezes from the Rhone blew as bleakly as in the Camargue, blowing out the tapers and breaking the leads round the windows, and emptying the shells of the holy water. But what was the saddest sight of all, was to see the spire of the monastery as silent as an abandoned pigeon-house, and the fathers, having no means of buying a bell, were reduced to ring their matins by clanging pieces of wood gathered from the almond-tree.

Poor White Fathers! I can still see them, as they appeared at the procession for the Fête-Dieu, and as they passed along as sadly with their hoods all patched, all so pale and thin (for their only food was pumpkins and water-melons). Bringing up the rear was the Prior, all abashed, with his head down, and appearing quite ashamed to show his ungilded crosier and moth-eaten mitre in white wool to the sun. The ladies who belonged to the association were actually crying for

mere pity's sake, and the fat banner-bearers were joking among themselves and pointing at the poor monks. "Starlings are always thin when they go about in bands."

The fact is, the unfortunate White Monks had more than once discussed among themselves whether it would not be better to separate and each start in a different direction, in search of gain. One day as this very subject was being discussed in the chapter-house, a message was brought to the Prior, to ask him to speak to Brother Gaucher, who was anxious to be admitted to the council.

You must know that this same Brother Gaucher was the cowherd of the monastery; that is to say, that he spent his days in driving before him, through the arches of the monastery, two thin cows, who sought their food in the chinks of the pavement. He himself had been brought up by an old woman who was quite mad, in the country of Baux, and she was known by the name of Aunt Bégon; afterwards he had been picked up by the White Fathers. The unfortunate cowherd had never been able to learn anything more than to recite his Pater Noster (and that he could only recite in the Provençal tongue), and look after the cows, for he was unusually thick-headed, and "as sharp as a wooden beetle." It is a true saying that "empty casks have the best sound."

He was a fervent Christian, although somewhat dreamy; he wore the sackcloth cheerfully, and gave himself the discipline with a full assurance of its efficacy, and with such force . . . When he made his appearance in the chapter-room, in a simple awkward manner, bowing to the assembly with one leg behind, the Prior, the canons, the treasurer, all burst out laughing. This always happened when he appeared with his good old face, and with his goat-like beard and his foolish eyes; so being accustomed to this hilarity, Brother Gaucher was not troubled. "Reverend fathers," he began, while he was twisting in his fingers a rosary made of olive-stones, "would you believe that by dint of racking my poor head, which is usually very empty, I think I have discovered a way out of our difficulties. You all know my Aunt Bégon—that honest woman who cared for me when I was quite a child (God preserve her soul; the old sinner, she used to sing shocking songs when she was drunk!). I must tell you, reverend fathers, that my Aunt Bégon was very learned in mountain herbs, as much so as any cunning fellow in Corsica. In order to prove it, she concocted, when she was dying, an admirable elixir composed of five or six kinds of herbs, which we used to go and pick up together on the Alpilles. It is a very long time ago, but I believe with the help of St. Augustine and with the help of the Prior, I could after a diligent search find this mysterious elixir. We could then bottle it; and by selling it at a good price, our monastery would

become rich, by degrees, like our brethren of the Trappe and of the Grande."

He could not finish his sentence, for the Prior had got up and had thrown himself on his neck. The monks seized him by the hands; the treasurer, more enthusiastic even than the others, kissed with reverence the tattered border of his robe; then each one returned to his seat to discuss the matter, and the chapter decided that Brother Thrasybule was in future to look after the cows, in order that Brother Gaucher might give up all his time to the concoction of his famous elixir.

How our good Brother succeeded in finding the recipe belonging to his Aunt Bégon, at what expense of time and trouble, history does not tell us; only one thing was quite certain, and that was that the White Fathers in a few months were quite popular again. In all the country of the Comtat, and also about Arles, there was not a granary or a wine vault which did not include amongst their bottles of old wine, and bottles of olives *à la picholine*, a small brown bottle sealed with the arms of Provence, and with the picture of a monk in ecstasies, on the silver ticket. Thanks to the sale of the elixir, the monastery of the Prémontrés became rapidly very rich; the monks were able to have the Pacôme tower raised; the Prior bought a new mitre; the church was ornamented with pretty carved windows; and in the finely laced-sculptured steeple a peal of bells, both small and large, rang out a glad sound on Easter morning.

As to Brother Gaucher—he who till now had been the butt of the monastery on account of his ungainly ways—the jokes had entirely ceased; he was now known as the Reverend Father Gaucher, a man of much learning, and of a great mind, who lived quite apart, and was no more to occupy himself with the various occupations of his monastic calling. He lived shut up in his distillery, whilst thirty monks were collecting herbs for him. This distillery, which was so private that not even the Prior was admitted into it, was an old abandoned chapel, quite at the extremity of the canons' garden.

The monks in their simplicity had worked themselves up to consider it quite a mysterious and formidable place, and if by accident any adventurous and curious young monk reached as far as the *rosace* of the door, he came down in great haste, quite frightened at the sight of Father Gaucher with his alchemist's beard, stooping over his ovens. Inhaling the grateful steam, and slowly stirring it with his pipe, he seemed to recognise the malicious eyes of Aunt Bégon in the small glistening spangles that floated over the emerald mixture; they seemed as if laughing at him, and to say: "Come! take another drop!" Drop added to drop at last filled the goblet to overflowing. The exhausted monk fell down in a large arm-chair, his body quite

powerless, his eyelids half closed. He remembered his sins, by fits and starts repeating in a low tone in a delightful, penitent way: "Ah! I am damning myself! I am damning myself!" But what was worst of all was, that he found written at the bottom of this diabolical elixir by some foul means all the bad songs that Aunt Bégon used to sing: "Three old little women who liked a feast," or Bergerette (maître André's friend), "Does she ever go to the woods alone?" and always the famous one relating to the White Fathers, "Patatin, Patatan." Only imagine what a noise and confusion all this must have created. His neighbours, in the nearest cells, looked at him with a sly air. "Ah! ah! Father Gaucher, you had some bees in your bonnet last night as you undressed." Then he would begin to despair, and to cry, and to fast, and to use sack-cloth and the discipline. Nothing could succeed against this devil in the form of the elixir, and every night at the same hour the same play was enacted; and, an areometer in his hand and surrounded with cucurbites made in pink sandstone, gigantic alembics, crystal serpentes, it was a strange mixture, and a bewitching light gleamed forth through the window. At even when the last Angelus was rung, the door of this mysterious place was discreetly opened, and the Reverend Father went to church to attend the evening service, you should have seen what a reception was given him when he crossed the monastery! The brothers formed a line to let him pass; they bade each other keep silence. "Chut . . . he has the secret!" . . . The treasurer followed him, and spoke with bated breath, and with his head down. . . . Amidst all these adulations the Reverend Father passed by sponging his forehead, his broad-brimmed, three-cornered hood on the back of his head like a halo, and looking with delight around him at the great courts, thickly planted with orange-trees, the blue roofs (where weathercocks were turning round); and in the glistening cloisters, between whose elegant pillars the canons, newly clad, were defiling two by two with restful countenances.

"They owe all this to me!" said the Reverend Father to himself, and even the very thought of it puffed him up with pride. You will see how the poor man was punished for it . . . Would you believe me, one evening during the divine service he arrived in the chapel in a very agitated state, very red, and out of breath, with his hood awry, and he was so much shaken, that when he took holy water he plunged in his arms up to his very elbows. At first this mishap was put down to his being late, but when he began to make exaggerated bows to the organ loft and the galleries around, instead of to the high altar, and to rush through the church like a madman, and stroll hither and thither in search of his place in the stalls, and when once seated he bowed to right and left, smiling with an imbecile look

in his face, a hum of astonishment filled the three naves. The monks were whispering to each other over their breviaries: "What is the matter with Father Gaucher? What is the matter with Father Gaucher?"

The Prior twice, with an impatient movement, let his crosier fall in order to impose silence. It is true that the Psalms were still being heartily chanted at the extremity of the choir, but the responses were not so spirited. Suddenly, in the midst of the Ave Verum, Father Gaucher falls from his seat, and begins intoning in a clear voice: "There lived once upon a time in Paris a White Monk, Patatin, Patatan, Tarabin, Taraban," &c. This last act caused general dismay. Every one got up. Cries of "Remove him . . . he is possessed with a devil!" The canons crossed themselves. The Prior's crosier began to exert itself. . . . But Father Gaucher did not observe or hear anything, and two strong monks were obliged to drag him out by the little door of the choir. He was meanwhile kicking like one possessed, and continued with renewed zeal his song of Patatin and Tarabin.

The next day at dawn the unfortunate man was on his knees in the Prior's oratory, and was performing his penance amidst floods of tears! "It was the elixir, it was the elixir which was too much for me," he kept on repeating whilst he beat his breast. The Prior was quite touched in witnessing such genuine grief.

"Come, come, Father Gaucher, quiet yourself, all will right itself. After all, it was not so very scandalous as you think it was. It is true there was that horrid song which was a little bit . . . hum . . . hum . . . It is only to be hoped that the novices did not hear it. Now tell me exactly how it all happened . . . It was by tasting the elixir, was it not? . . . You were rather too prodigal with it . . . Yes, yes, I understand, like Schwartz the inventor of gunpowder, you have been a victim to your own invention. And now tell me, my honest friend, is it necessary for you to taste yourself this most dreadful elixir?"

"Unfortunately it is, my lord! the meter shows me how much alcohol I ought to put in; but for the finishing touch, I would only trust to my own taste."

"Ah very well! but listen, and I will ask you another question. When you taste this alcohol out of necessity, do you like it? Does it please you?"

"Alas! yes, my lord," answered the unfortunate man, getting very red, "for the last two nights, especially, I found out a particularly nice taste in it . . . I am quite sure that the devil has played me this trick; I am quite determined not to use the meter again, all the worse if the 'liqueur' is not tasted enough, or finished up."

"Heavens ! protect us from such a resolution," answered the Prior, sharply. "We must not displease our customers. All that you can do, now that you have had a lesson, will be, to be more careful. Let us see, about how many drops does it take to make up your account ? Fifteen or twenty ?

"Twenty, I should say."

"The devil would be very clever to catch you with twenty drops Also, in order to prevent any future accident, I will permit you to say your evening prayers in the distillery, instead of coming to church. And now go in peace, my Reverend Father, and please take care to count your drops."

Alas, the poor Reverend Father counted them in vain: the devil held him and would not give him up. Strange noises came forth from the distillery. During the daytime everything was quiet. The Father was always calm; he prepared his chafing dishes, his alembics, carefully sorted his herbs—they were all herbs found in Provence, rare ones and grey and variegated ones exhaling strange perfumes. But at night when the simples were infused, and the elixir was cooling in immense brass caldrons, the poor man's martyrdom began. Seventeen—eighteen—nineteen—twenty ! The drops fell from the pipe into the pewter goblet. All these twenty drops the Father swallowed at one gulp, without much feeling of delight. But the twenty-first he longed after. Oh ! to taste that twenty-first drop ; so in order to escape temptation, he would go and kneel quite at the extremity of the laboratory, and his thoughts were for some time in his Pater Nosters. There rose a little perfumed smoke from the still heated "liqueur," which enveloped him, and, whether he chose or not, brought his thoughts back to his caldrons. The "liqueur" was of a beautiful golden green colour Meanwhile, orders were pouring into the monastery—it was a great blessing they received them—from Nismes, Aix, Avignon, Marseilles Gradually the monastery became a small manufactory. There were brothers who packed, brothers who ticketed, others who wrote, others who managed the transport business. In this way they became very lax in their religious duties—the bells were very rarely rung ; but I assure you the poor country folks were no losers by the change ! Well, one fine Sunday when the treasurer was reading the account of the year which was ending before the whole assembled chapter, the hearty canons were listening with gleaming eyes and smiling lips, when quite suddenly Father Gaucher rushed in among them crying : "It is all over now I will make no more. . . . Give me back my cows !"

"What is the matter, Father Gaucher ?" asks the Prior ; who, however, had his doubts as to what was the matter !

" 'What is the matter,' my lord ? The matter is, that I am on the

high road to perdition, an eternity of flames and of pitchforks The fact is, that I drink like a fish."

"But I warned you to count the drops."

"Oh! yes, it was all very well to count the drops, but now I should have to count the goblets. Yes, reverend fathers, I have reached to that depth of degradation I take my three bottles nightly You understand that this cannot last, therefore you must find some one else to concoct the elixir for you. Let the everlasting fire consume me if I meddle with it again."

I can tell you the whole chapter did not laugh when they heard these words. "But unfortunate man, you will be the cause of our ruin," cried the treasurer, agitating his enormous book.

"Would you prefer that I should be damned?"

At these words the Prior stood up. "Reverend Fathers," he began, extending his beautiful white hand, on which was the pastoral ring, "everything will be arranged for the best. It is at night, is it not? my dear son, that the devil tempts you?"

"Yes, holy Prior, regularly every night As soon as evening closes in, I find myself perspiring at the mere thought of what is going to happen to me, like Capitou's ass at the thought of his burden."

"Very well! calm yourself we will recite St. Augustine's prayers for your benefit, and I will join to them a plenary indulgence. By these means you will be quite safe. It is actually giving you absolution whilst you are in the act of sinning."

"Oh, well, many thanks, my lord Prior," and without further ado Father Gaucher returned to his distillery as gay as a lark. Surely from that day forth, every evening at the end of the evensong the officiating monk never missed saying: "Let us pray for our poor Father Gaucher who sacrifices his eternal happiness to the interests of the monastery."

"Oremus Domine"

Then when the prayers of the cowed monks sounded through the nave like the blowing of an easterly wind amidst snow, at the other extremity of the monastery Father Gaucher, behind the blazing window of his distillery, was heard singing with all his might:

"In Paris there lived a White Monk,
Patatin, Patatan," &c.

Here the good Curé stopped quite frightened. "Mercy!" cried he, "if my parishioners were only to hear me."

An Experiment in Mesmerism.

THIRTY Christmas nights have come and gone since that one, so memorable in my life, and yet sitting here in my solitary room, a grey-haired lonely woman, the whole scene rises as vividly before me as though it had occurred but yesterday. I can see the comfortably but plainly furnished, low-ceiled, old-fashioned room, with its dark wainscoted walls, and its dim corners, that the feeble light of a couple of composite candles could scarcely reach ; I can see the half circle of faces gathered round the hearth, looking glowing and pleasant in the ruddy glare of the firelight—all except one, that of a man who sat in the corner opposite to me.

I could not keep my eyes off that face, which had for me the fascination of ugliness ; as the lights and shadows made by the flickering flame touched the shock of bristly hair that half concealed the low, narrow forehead, the cavernous eyes, sunken cheeks and huge mouth, half open with a cynical smile, that showed the tusk-like teeth, I could compare it only with a shifting series of gargoyles from some old monkish ruin.

We were all members of the company of the Theatre Royal X——, and, it being a non-play night, we were assembled at the lodgings of one of our members, a lady, to do honour to her birthday. Our usual theme, the affairs of the theatre, past, present, and future, being exhausted, the conversation, I cannot remember how, had turned upon mesmerism and clairvoyance, and I was stoutly declaring my utter disbelief in either, my scepticism being greatly intensified by the circumstance that Tony Arnold—the man I have just described, and who was one of the low comedians of our company—took the opposite side. There had always been an antagonism between us, and, although I had no actual cause for such a feeling, a positive dislike upon my part, which I believe was pretty strongly reciprocated upon his.

Although I was scarcely twenty at the time, I was what people would have called rather a strong-minded girl, with opinions of my own that I never shrank from asserting, with an obstinacy that no argument could overcome ; and on this night, excited by a spirit of defiance to my *vis-à-vis*, I expressed them with a bigotry and contempt that were anything but polite to those who differed from me.

“By your positiveness, Miss Grace,” sneered Arnold, “I pre-

sume you have had a very large experience of the trickeries of mesmerists.

"Oh, indeed I have not," I replied sharply, "I was never at any exhibition of the kind in my life, and never intend to be. I should not have patience even to witness such a transparent imposture."

"Suppose," he said, and there was a gleam in his eyes which indicated rising temper—"suppose I could give you ocular demonstration that you are wrong, by placing someone in this room under mesmeric influence; I have done the thing often. If I did this before your own eyes, when you would be quite assured there could not be trick or collusion, would you believe in it then?"

"I don't know that I should," I answered doggedly. "If you have such a power," I added with a contemptuous smile, "why don't you try it upon me?"

Arnold was evidently taken aback. I do not think he dreamed of my taking up his challenge. He regarded me for some seconds with a doubtful, wavering glance, which I met defiantly and mockingly.

"I would prefer any one else in the room," he answered hesitatingly.

"Of course you would," I replied with a malicious laugh; "I am not a good subject: the mystic influence is powerless over disbelievers. Oh, I know all the jargon!"

And I cast a triumphant glance round the company, who were exceedingly amused at our discussion.

Arnold turned alternately white and red with rage and mortification.

"It is not that," he answered quickly, then paused, but, evidently stung by my contemptuous laugh, he added instantly, "Very well, be it so, since you desire it."

The prospect of having the discussion so summarily tested and adjudged created an immense excitement, and I could feel my own cheeks burning, and my pulses galloping at fever heat as Arnold proceeded to make preparations for the experiment.

I anticipated the usual passes and hand-wavings, of which I had heard and read, but I soon perceived that his method was going to be entirely different. He began by placing two chairs exactly opposite to one another, in one of which he requested me to be seated; then he draped a large black cloak round me, so that only my face rose above it; then a lamp, borrowed from the landlady of the house, was set in such a position that the light should focus upon my face; after which he took the chair opposite to mine, and desired me to fix my eyes firmly upon his, and not remove them for a second.

I followed his instructions—and the next moment I was staring intently into a pair of greenish-brown orbs that I could feel did not meet mine with equal steadiness. There was a profound silence,

broken only by a little suppressed giggle from the females, and an occasional low whisper from the men.

We had been thus only a few seconds when Arnold sprang up exclaiming, "It's no use, I cannot do it."

A shout of laughter hailed this confession of defeat, and throwing off my drapery I jumped up and joined heartily in the chorus.

Arnold was white as death and extremely agitated. He made no reply to the volleys of "chaff" that assailed him on all sides, but again turning to me said in a tone of intense earnestness: "I cannot mesmerise you, but you can me: those strong, steel grey eyes of yours, with their metallic lustre, are far more potent than mine. Come, will you try?"

I did not need the incitement of hand-clapping and the chorus of "Oh do!" that greeted the proposition, to promptly consent. I began to be deeply interested in the experiment, and now that I was myself accredited with possessing this occult power my scepticism began to waver.

"But before we go any further," he said, "I must make one condition—and that is, that should I fall into a comatose state, you will not put to me any question of a private nature—as I shall be compelled to answer truthfully, literally, whatever it may be."

I promised faithfully not to do so.

The previous disposition was now reversed, the lamp was set so that the light should shine upon my face, and Arnold was enveloped in the cloak, as I had been.

And now, with all the nerve power I possessed, I fastened my eyes upon Arnold's. White and ghastly looked his face rising out of the blackness of the drapery, which gave it almost the appearance of being divided from the body and suspended in space. The lips were wide apart, and the greenish eyes were dilated to their utmost extent, with a strained fascinated look, such as they might have worn under the influence of a rattlesnake. I could scarcely suppress a shiver at this uncanny-looking picture; but a wild spirit took possession of me that night which soon swept away all such "compunctious visitings of nature." Everybody seemed to be thoroughly impressed by the weirdness of the situation: there was no giggling, no whispering, all was silent as death. After about a minute my eyes grew rigid in their intense stare, until it seemed to me that I no longer had the power to move or close them, or even wink a lid; gradually I could feel the pupils dilate, until they seemed to become two huge discs glowing with a lambent and metallic fire. I could see that every nerve of the white face was quivering, the breathing was short and laboured, and a dull, stony glare came into the starting eyeballs, a far away trance-like look, that told me consciousness was gone, and that the

very soul of the man had passed over to my keeping. And I felt a cold, cruel, hard triumph in this, a desire to strain my mastery to the utmost. I rose from my seat, slowly moved backwards and imperiously beckoned him, never relaxing my fixed stare, which seemed to scintillate and flash. As I rose, he rose, clutching the edge of the table to guide his trembling steps. Slowly I moved, he following, seemingly impelled by an involuntary but resistless impulse. I stopped suddenly; he stopped.

"What is your name?" I asked imperatively.

In a forced hollow voice he gave one, that I afterwards discovered was his family name, Arnold being only a theatrical sobriquet.

At this one of the gentlemen broke in, protesting:

"No, no; that is against the bargain—no questions."

"It is time to put an end to it; I don't like it," said another.

"Oh! yes," added a lady, "it is too horrible."

The interruption seemed to exorcise the fiend that possessed me, and call me back to myself; with an effort I wrenched my gaze from the ghastly face. As I did so, Arnold, as though he had been only upheld by my eyes, fell upon the floor in strong convulsions.

Our experiment in mesmerism spoiled the rest of the evening: for although after a copious outward application of cold water, and a judicious inward one of neat brandy, he soon recovered and tried to laugh off his illness, it left a creepy, disagreeable depression upon all, which no amount of hot spirits and water and forced jollity could succeed in dispelling.

As it may be supposed, the effect was strongest upon me, and it chiefly took the form of intense annoyance at the part I had played; I would have given anything to have recalled the past few minutes. After Arnold's recovery, by a tacit understanding, no one made any reference to his strange illness, indeed all seemed desirous for a time of putting it out of their thoughts—and none so much as the principal actor in it, who laughed and jested in a feverish manner and never allowed the conversation to flag for a single moment, as though he feared the subject might crop up again.

Everybody, however, was eagerly discussing the singular event the next morning at rehearsal. I avoided the gossiping groups, for the remembrance of the scene was a horror to me; so did Arnold, whom I studiously attempted to avoid, but he took an exactly opposite course, following me wherever I went, trying to engage me in conversation, and to catch my eye, as though some of the fascination of the previous night still surrounded me.

After a rather late dinner, for the rehearsal was very long, I was dozing in my chair when there came a soft tap at the door, and to my sleepy "come in" there appeared upon the threshold the tall, gaunt

figure of the man whom of all others I least desired to see. It gave me quite a shock. It was the first time he had ever called at my lodgings.

In common courtesy I was obliged to ask him to take a seat and draw near the fire, as the weather was cold. In a vague, listless manner he placed a chair in such a position that it exactly faced mine, dropped into it without a word and tried to fix my eyes. I immediately shifted them and gazed into the fire.

He made no attempt to account for this visit; he talked very little, and in an absent manner—that betrayed that his thoughts were not on his tongue—about the business of the theatre. I felt very embarrassed by his presence, and presently rose and rang for tea. What could I do but ask him to remain, and take it with me? He said “Thank you,” and kept his seat. I felt quite terrified by the change that had come over him—from a noisy, jesting, rollicking kind of fellow, who had always a gibe for me, to this silent, subdued man, with those dreadful eyes ever yearningly seeking mine.

At length he went away, and never in my life did I feel so thankful for anybody’s departure.

But he came the next day about the same time, and acted in just the same manner, until the lights were brought in; then all at once he rose from his chair, crossed over to where I was sitting, and laying his hand upon my arm said, in a hoarse whisper, “Mesmerise me!”

I started back, and answered shudderingly, “Not for worlds!”

“You must,” he answered passionately.

And somehow or other, I cannot tell how, a few minutes afterwards we were sitting *vis-à-vis* staring into each other’s eyes. In less than a minute there was in his the dull stony vagueness of insensibility.

I covered my face with my hands, but withdrew them, as I heard something fall heavily upon the floor, to see him huddled at my feet in convulsions, the froth bubbling upon his lips.

I did not call for assistance; luckily I had some water and some brandy in the room. I knelt down and copiously bathed his head and face, and then with some difficulty forced a little of the spirit between his clenched teeth.

When he recovered I nearly fainted myself; but rallying by an effort, I told him very positively that he must not come any more.

“I cannot stay away; I must come,” was his answer. And again the dilated eyes began to wander cravingly in search of mine.

I cannot describe the horror I felt at these visits, and at length I begged a lady friend I had in the theatre to come and stay with me. The following afternoon he strolled in as usual, but finding I had a companion he looked very annoyed, and remained only a few minutes.

Several days passed and I met him only in business. His manner was sullen, almost rude to me, at which I was much relieved, for I now began to entertain hopes that he would persecute me no more. The change that had come over him was a constant subject of green-room comment; he had always been extremely thin, now he seemed to waste day by day, like a man consumed by an inward fire; his cheeks were sunk in deeper hollows, and there were black rims round his eyes.

After a few days my friend returned to her own lodgings. The next afternoon, at the usual hour, Arnold came as before.

As soon as the lights were brought in he again besought me to mesmerise him. I firmly refused; but I could not rest my eyes upon him for a moment without his face beginning to quiver and his pupils to dilate, and the very feeling that I must not look at him made the desire almost unconquerable. Matters went on thus for upwards of a week.

But surely, it will be said, you could have devised some means of keeping him away; you might have requested your landlady to refuse him admittance. Truly, I could have done so, but—well, I must confess it even in my own defence—Arnold had begun to throw a strange glamour over me; I dreaded his coming, yet I experienced a vague yearning when he was absent. I had fallen myself within the meshes of the spell I had unconsciously cast upon him.

One afternoon he arrived rather earlier than usual; there was certainly some occult sympathy between us, for the moment he entered the room I felt that a crisis was come.

He was in very weak health, and he sank down in a chair looking pale and exhausted, and wiped the damps from his forehead, while his breathing was very laboured; and there was a feverish glitter in the restless eyes and a red spot in each hollow cheek.

“How very ill you look,” I said pityingly; “let me give you a glass of wine.”

“No, I want nothing,” he answered in a gasping tone, “there’s quite fire enough within me now; I am being slowly burned up.”

“Have you seen a doctor?” I asked, growing very nervous.

“A doctor,” he echoed, with a mocking laugh. “Oh yes, I have seen a doctor, but he can do me no good. It is you who are killing me.”

“I!” I exclaimed faintly.

“Yes,” he answered; “since the night you tore the heart and soul out of my body I cannot live without you, and I won’t.”

I was very much terrified by his wild, excited looks, but replied with a great show of firmness, “You talk nonsense, Arnold; why, you are married already.”

I did not know at the moment whether it was really so, but there

was a vague impression among the company that such was the case, and it was upon that authority only that I spoke.

"How did you know that—you questioned me when I was under your influence?" he retorted sharply.

"I did not, but I find it is true. And under such circumstances, how dare you address me in such terms?" I exclaimed growing very indignant, perhaps more in seeming than in reality.

"Yes," he replied dejectedly, "I am married to a woman I hate, to a woman I left at the church door. I was forced into it by my friends—never mind why, that would not interest you."

He paused for a moment, then laying his trembling fingers upon my arm, he added, "Alice," he had come to call me by my Christian name, "if anything were to happen to *her*—if she were to die—would you be my wife?"

I started away from him exclaiming, "Don't talk like that, it is too horrible!"

But he followed me, and again grasped my arm, and said, "Alice, I told you just now that I cannot live without you, and that I will not, and I swear before God that if you do not give me this promise, when I leave this house I will throw myself over the bridge into the river—I swear it!"

Men—and women, too—say these things in moments of strong passion without keeping their words; but I knew that he would keep his, the mysterious sympathy that had been created between us told me so, told me that if he left me with that thought in his heart, he would not be a living man within the next hour.

It was nearly dark, just between the lights, and his face gleamed out of the shadows white and terrible, and then I thought how it would look when it was drawn out of the water with the long dank hair clinging about it."

"It is not much I ask of you," he went on pleadingly. "Why, she may outlive us both; more than likely; there is nothing shocking in it—she is nothing to me, never has been, only the mockery of a ceremony links us."

"But what is the use of such a pledge, what satisfaction can it be to you?" I said, still with my face covered, for I dreaded to meet his eyes.

"I don't know," he answered, "it would give me a sort of hope that I can't live without, that I won't live without."

Well, I gave him the promise. I daresay you will consider it was very wicked of me to do so. I think so myself. But I thought it was almost impossible that I should be ever called upon to fulfil it, and how could I hesitate when a man's life seemed to be at stake?

The following morning, as I was seated at breakfast, I caught sight

of Arnold's dark figure passing my parlour window, and the next moment I heard his now well-known knock at the street door. I put down the cup of coffee that I had raised half-way to my lips, while an unaccountable dread stole over me.

One glance at his countenance as he entered the room told me that something had happened. He did not look at me, nor even exchange a greeting, as he laid down his hat and took a chair.

"I have strange news to tell you, Alice," he said, in a voice thick and indistinct with agitation.

"For God's sake don't tell me that——"

I could not complete the utterance of my fears, my voice died away in my throat, and with parted lips and rigid eyes I could only await the explanation.

Meantime he had taken from his breast-pocket a letter, which he rose and offered me. *It had a deep black border.*

I shrank back; I would not touch it; I knew its contents.

"You knew what was going to happen—you have cruelly entrapped me," I exclaimed bitterly.

He threw himself upon his knees at my feet. "I swear most solemnly," he cried, "I did not. It was very sudden, the letter will tell you so; heart disease—her friends had scarcely a moment's warning.

There was that in his tone I could not disbelieve, and when, after a while, I brought myself to read the fatal letter, I found his assertions were there fully confirmed.

"This makes it all the more horrible," I cried, "for I now feel as though I were in some way the cause of her death."

I implored him to release me from my promise, as nothing good could come of a marriage contracted under such auspices. But he only repeated the old words, "I cannot live without you, and I won't!"

My friend, who could perceive how ill-assorted we were, did all in her power to persuade me to break with him. "Leave the company," she said, "give no notice of your intention and go home, or take another engagement under another name."

But I felt that I could not break a vow so solemnly made, and which fate, whether for good or evil, had so suddenly called upon me to fulfil.

No, I am wrong: I did not love him, it was only a glamour—whether the result of supernatural influence or mere superstition I cannot pretend to say—it was a mixture of dread, repulsion, and fascination.

That day two months was our wedding-day. I had striven hard to postpone it to a much later date, but he would not give me

a moment's peace until I consented. "She was my wife only in name," he kept urging, "so what need is there of delay?"

Although the strange manner of our wooing was unknown to everybody, save the friend I have before mentioned, it was impossible for the company not to see how matters stood between us. But somehow we had drifted away from the rest, and now kept aloof from them, and only an occasional hint, or innuendo, or sly look told us of their observation. I know we were the constant theme of conversation and wonderment, but I do not think that any one ever dreamed it would be a match.

And we were both equally desirous of keeping our approaching marriage a profound secret. My friend, and one of the actors whom Arnold had almost sworn to secrecy, were to be the only witnesses, so that when on that bright March morning we entered the quiet suburban church, only a few strange loiterers were there. We were dressed in our ordinary costume, and no one who had met us would have suspected our purpose.

When he passed the ring over my finger, his hand was like ice, so were his lips that just touched mine at the end of the ceremony, and I saw no joy in the livid face that was expressionless as though carved in stone.

We walked back from the church to my lodgings, where we were to be domiciled for the present. He scarcely spoke the whole way. He left me at the door, saying that he was obliged to go somewhere, but that he would return in time for dinner, which was arranged for three o'clock.

I ran upstairs to my bedroom, my heart ready to burst with mortification, and had a good cry. My friend did all she could to console me, and to put a cheerful face upon matters, and after a while I rallied a little, and went downstairs and sat down to the piano, and played and sang to pass away the time.

Three o'clock came and passed, and still he did not return. Then his friend, who had remained with us, said he would go in search of him.

In about half-an-hour he came back, bringing Arnold with him. He afterwards told me that he had found him playing cards, and recklessly treating everybody who entered the room at a tavern used by the actors. I always possessed a great deal of self control, and I kept myself quite tranquil.

It had been arranged that we should sup at my friend's lodgings, and thither after the performance, for we played that night, we went. There were only four of us—the four present at the ceremony. Arnold was dull and sullen, and at times seemed scarcely conscious of where he was, for, when addressed, he would start and look vacantly about him, like one suddenly aroused from a doze.

It was two o'clock in the morning before we turned our faces homewards. Silently he pursued his way; and I was too proud to speak. But, oh, the agony, the shame, the humiliation I endured that night! When we arrived at our lodgings, the fire was out. It was a very chilly night, and he complained of being cold, and said he should re-kindle it. While he went away seeking some wood in the kitchen I ran upstairs to my room, and went to bed.

At last my aching, swollen eyes closed, and I fell asleep.

When I awoke, the cold, grey dawn of the spring morning was just stealing across the darkness of my room. I awoke with a start, and sat bolt upright, with a sense of ineffable horror. Had I been dreaming? I could not remember. Yet there was upon me all the terror which is left by some ghastly nightmare.

I leaped out of bed, huddled on a dressing-gown, and with bare feet hurried down the stairs. It was an impulse, nothing more, for I had no thought in what I was doing. I opened the parlour door, and looked in. All was dark and silent.

"He has gone to sleep upon the sofa," was my reflection. My woman's pride prompted me to return to my chamber, but some other feeling held me rooted to the spot. The chinks of the shutters were pencilled with faint lines of light. I crossed the room, unbarred and threw them open, and looked up at the sky. The waning moon was high in the heavens, over which a faint roseate flush was just stealing, and a wild chorus of birds in the trees close by alone broke the deep stillness of the early morning.

I stood gazing upon the picture for some seconds, not because I felt its beauty, but because I dared not turn my head.

When, after a time, I summoned up resolution to do so, it was slowly, and by degrees. First my eyes fell upon the sofa; that was empty: then they travelled towards the hearth. The fire had burned into a great hollow, grey and brown within, black above. I could see only a portion of the grate, as an easy-chair was drawn in front of it. There was *something* in the chair, something lolling sideways; and there was a coat-sleeve with a hand dangling across one arm. I could feel my hair bristle and my heart stand still as I crept up to it, and saw a huddled heap of clothing, in which was half buried a livid, hair-strewn face.

It was my husband—*dead*.

NOTE.—This story is not only founded upon facts but the events happened almost exactly as they are related here.

What it Meant.

By RHODA BROUGHTON.

I HAD the last look. I shall always maintain that. Alice thought that she had got the better of me by going round to the other side of the cab and teasing him to kiss her through the window, though she was all smouched with tears—a thing he never liked, and he was hunting for his flask which he had mislaid; but I was even with her. I jumped in at the last moment and drove down with him to the gate. We did not say anything at all, but he let me hold his hand all the way, and at the very last, when I was actually on the step getting out, he said, “God bless you!”

Alice will not believe it, but he did. He, so undemonstrative, who never in his life be-dear-ed or be-darling-ed us, he said, “God bless you!” I am so glad that I did not annoy him with tears. I think that that was his way of paying me. I told Alice so, which made her very angry, as she had cried like a pump; but after all, perhaps it distracted us a little to brawl over it, as we did intermittently for the rest of the day. If we had not quarrelled, I cannot think how we should have got through the day at all. It was at least an occupation, and the only one which was not rendered intolerable by being inextricably entangled with his memory. Ever since he came home on sick leave, five months earlier, our life had been so built upon him and his convenience, that now that the keystone was withdrawn, our bridge seemed to collapse. For five months our every action had had some reference to him. Now that he was gone, all action seemed useless. This parting was, as we both agreed, worse, far worse, than any former one. They had all been bad enough, but when he was at school there were at least the long Midsummer and the short Christmas to look to; there was jam to send him, and the penny post to bring letters only twelve hours old. Even when he first went out to join his regiment in India, his own buoyant gladness in the prospect, his confidence that the climate would suit him—(did not hot weather here always suit him? the hotter the better)—had imparted to us, too, some faint ray of courage. But now that we knew certainly that that young confidence had been misplaced, now that there was burnt in upon our memories the look of him sent back to us as he had been last autumn—faint, deathly, bleached and emaciated almost past recognition—is it any wonder that our pulses beat low as we gave him back trembling

to that feverish soil that is ever being new-paved with British graves?

And though he would not for a moment have suffered us to indulge, nor indeed would we have plagued him with, any morbid forebodings, yet we agreed, Alice and I, that his own dear heart seemed to grow heavy as the time for parting drew nigh. Not so heavy though as ours which he left behind. On that black first day, house and garden were equally bitter to us; the house where in the hall still stood the invalid couch on which, for weeks after his return, he languidly lay stretched; the garden where in his later better time, during the two or three days of premature summer that had thrust themselves among February's harsh cold troop, he had swung a hammock for us. There it still hung between the ilex that the hard winter had pinched, and the cedar that no stress of frost or storm could change from its unaltered green. I stood with my hand on the hammock ropes. "Only sons should not be sent on foreign service!" I said with sententious sadness; my eyes absently fixed on the solid red brick Georgian house that seemed to share the sullenness of the low slate-coloured sky.

"Only sons' sisters should be sent on foreign service with them!" answered Alice, bettering my sentiment; "oh, if" (with a profound sigh) "we were all three steaming down to Folkestone together!"

"How pleased the regiment would be to see us!" rejoined I drily, and we both laughed. We were surprised and shocked the moment that we had done it, but we did laugh. Yes, he had not been gone three hours when we laughed! At luncheon we were quite upset again by Figaro the black poodle going unmasked through all the tricks that Dick had taught him. Usually it required entreaties, threats, and unlimited Albert biscuits to induce him to execute one; but to-day, just when he knew they would be too much for us, he volunteered them all! In the evening—the evening latterly dedicated to our rubber—that happy muff-rubber which in its qualities of levity and clamour much more nearly resembled a round game—in the evening, I say, we all lay strewn about, limp and tearful in our armchairs, leaving sacredly empty his, and gazing at it wistfully till the clock struck ten, and the day was mercifully at an end. The next day was a shade better; we cried less and ate more; the next a shade better again; and the next a shade better again than that. In fine, by the end of the week we had plucked up our spirits so far as to teach Figaro half a new trick, and our armchairs being limited—and our dear boy's empty one patently far the most comfortable one—we had, reluctantly at first, but with ever-growing callousness, abandoned the idea of its consecration to emptiness and memory. Indeed Alice and I had wrangled

a good deal over our respective claims to its possession. By-and-by came his letters, the first from Paris, to say that he had had a rough passage, and that everybody on board, except himself, had been sick, but that he had walked about and enjoyed it; that he was going to the play at the Variétés; and that he hoped we would not forget to send him the sporting papers. The next letter was from Brindisi; the third from Aden, and so on. Very soon father and mother began to drop into their old way of showing his letters about: taking them with them to exhibit when they paid visits, and bringing them forth to read, in whole or in part, when any one called. It was a plan that Alice and I had always deprecated, and that no one would have disliked more than Dick himself, could he have known it. Alice and I had often noticed the stifled yawns of indifferent guests during these readings, and had still oftener observed the hurried excuses and regrets for being unable to stay longer as soon as there was any talk of the Indian letters being produced. And so, in time, he reached India, and was welcomed back as one from the dead by his fellow-soldiers, who hardly knew him again, so hale, and brown, and strong on his legs. And as to us, we fell into our old tame and tranquil ways—our main events, the Indian mail days; our twin bugbears, cholera and war. We had returned to our evening rubber; mother, who never could tell one card from another, and hated them all, being mercilessly compelled by us to take a hand.:

As the season advanced, and the air warmed, and the buds swelled, we spent more and more of our time lying in his hammock in the garden, where the cedar let fall its uncapricious dark shade on us, and even the shrivelled ilex put out some new leaves. When May came, there was scarce a moment of the day when it was not occupied by one or other of us, and we quarrelled over the right to occupy it as sharply as we had quarrelled over the possession of his armchair, and of the old torn gloves too worthless to take with him, that he had left lying—petulantly pulled off and rejected—on the hall table.

May had now just gone, and June's first splendid days were holding high holiday in earth and sky. The lilacs were over; they had been exceptionally profuse this year; even the thorns were on the wane, and the hot sun gave them the *coup de grâce*; and though the pink horse-chestnut still held up its stiff and stately spikes, yet a little tell-tale flushed carpet at its foot betrayed that it too was departing. But to make up to us for what we lost, the white pinks spread their spicy mats everywhere about the borders; the roses were only waiting for one lightest shower, to rush forth, one and all, and the cloying syringa made the air languid. It was not only the syringa, however. The day had been weighted with excess of unwonted heat, and even oncoming night had brought but little

freshness. We had strayed on the parched lawn and under the unstirred trees in vain search of a reviving breath, listening to the owl and the harsh but summer-voiced corncrake. We strayed till bedtime had come and passed—since our dear lad went, the day had seemed long enough, yes over-long by ten—and the clocks with one consent were telling the hour of eleven. So we turned homewards, and limply climbed the stairs to bed. My room was in the roof, and on that roof, all through the immense June day, the sun had been mightily striking, so that, though all my three windows were set open to their fullest extent, the atmosphere was as of an engine-room.

I undressed dejectedly and lay down beneath the one sheet, which on that night seemed to have the weight and consistency of five good blankets. With small hope of sleep I lay down; my eyes, widely open, staring out at the tennis-ground and the hammock, and the pink horse-chestnut tree, not pink any longer now, but (all distinctions of colour lost in one grave gloom) of the same hue as the cedar and the ilex and the elm. I had small hope of sleep; and yet, by-and-by, sleep came. It must have come rather soon too, as I have no recollection of having heard the clocks strike again. I was awaked or, at least I seemed to be awaked, not with a start, but gradually by a voice. I found myself sitting up in bed and listening. I have no recollection of any panic fear, of any loud heart-beating, or paralysing of tongue or limbs, of any cold sweat of terror at this unexplained sound that was breaking the intense stillness of the night. I was only sitting up and listening. I could not tell whence the voice came, not even from what direction it seemed to issue. I had no slightest clue as to whom or what it could belong to. It was accompanied by no rustling of any earthly garment, by no most cautious stirring of any human foot. It was only a voice. I caught myself pondering as to whose voice it could be. To what voice that I knew had it any likeness? I could find none. Yet there was nothing dreadful, nothing threatening or fear-inspiring in its quality. It was simply a voice, and it was saying most slowly, most solemnly and most sadly, with a light pause between each two words, "Your brother!—your brother!—your brother!"

Then there was silence again. I listened intensely, poignantly, still unaccountably without fear; but there was nothing more. There was no sound of any one breathing near me, and no form intervened between me and the casement square. I do not know for how long I listened; it might have been minutes, or only half a minute. Then I spoke. I can hardly believe now that I dared to do it; were such a voice to come to me again—which God avert!—I am very sure that I should have no power to uncloset my lips or utter intelligible speech. But then I did. I said, still sitting up in bed, and staring

strainingly out into the dim but not dark room, and I can still recall the odd sound of my own voice as it broke upon the dumbness round me: "My brother! what about my brother?" There was another pause, during which you might, perhaps, have counted ten rather slowly; and then the voice came again, exactly the same as before; as slow, as solemn, as profoundly sad, and as impossible to trace whence it came—"Go into the garden and you will find a yellow lily striped with brown, and then you will know!" That was all. I listened, listened, listened, but there was nothing more. The words that I had heard kept ringing and echoing in my head, without my attaching any meaning to them at first; but then all at once they grew clear. "Go into the garden and you will find a yellow lily striped with brown, and then you will know!" How could I go into the garden now—the clocks were just striking one—alone—for the idea of waking anybody never occurred to me? The doors would be locked and bolted. I doubted if I should be able to draw the heavy bolts. Go into the garden in dressing-gown and bare feet at one o'clock in the morning! I had never done such a thing in my life! And a yellow lily striped with brown?—there was no such lily in the garden I was sure. It was not so large in extent that I could not have an intimate acquaintance with each blossom; and I recollected no such flower. In what border could it be? I ran over in my head 'our lilies. There were turncap lilies, but they were some red and some yellow. There were Mary lilies; but they were white, and as yet only in green bud. There were irises indeed so curiously and whimsically painted and streaked that there might be among them a yellow one striped with brown, but then irises are not lilies. Seized by a hot and biting curiosity, I slipped out of bed and—still inexplicably free from fear—walked barefoot to the window. There lay the garden—not precisely dark, for I could still see the tennis nets and the hammock, but overspread with so dusky a veil, that a hundred strange lilies might be hiding in its beds without my being able to distinguish or detect them. There was nothing for it but to go down and search. I could not resist the apparently senseless impulse. Go I must. I put on dressing-gown and slippers, and not lighting any candle, trusting to the lenity of the summer night and the bright planets, I opened my door and ran along the passages and down the stairs, whose every step I knew so well as to be able safely to race blindfold down them. I had recollected that the garden door locked less stiffly than the others, and had no bolts. In effect, I opened it without more noise than the slight unavoidable click that any key makes in turning, and stood on the sward outside. How strangely strange the familiar garden looked! Could this really be the tennis-ground, worn bare by our feet—this solemn silent space? Could this

be the pink horse-chestnut at whose rosy foot I had left my book lying last evening—this towering mass of darkness? How in this universal gloom that spread one colourless shade over all, could I distinguish the tint of one flower from another? I walked alongside the borders, stooping as I went to peer at the faces of the blossoms, both those that thriftily close at advancing night, nor waste their beauty on the unperceiving darkness, and those that still hold up their chalices to the stars. It was perfectly useless. I was stepping hopelessly across the grass, to a large oval bed of mixed shrubs and herbaceous plants which occupied the space immediately in front of the drawing-room windows, and of which I well know, as I thought, every inmate, and was convinced that among them grew no such flower as I sought, when suddenly the moon, who to-night rose late, looked over the belt of girdling forest trees that hedged us in. At once, directly before me, as plainly as if it were in the very eye of noon, I saw—I can see it now—a large tall yellow lily, with lines of brown streaking its petals. That there had been no such lily there, when last—late on the previous evening—I had visited the parterre (by which old-fashioned name we always called this part of the pleasure grounds) I was thoroughly convinced. Growing there straight and stately, unlike also any of our lilies, it was absolutely impossible that I could have overlooked it. It was still more absolutely impossible that it could have sprung up in its strength and beauty in the course of the night. Was it an optical delusion? Could I be suffering from some strange hallucination? I bent down low and touched it; put my fingers about its vigorous stem, and peered into the great orange-stamened vase of its expanded flower. For, like other lilies, it was as widely open as if it were the noon of day, instead of the noon of night. Into their pure cups the constellations look as freely as does the sun. It was certainly real, and as I stood in complete bewilderment, the words that the voice had uttered echoed back on my mind: “Go into the garden, and you will find a yellow lily striped with brown, and then you will know! But I had gone into the garden and found the lily, and I knew no more than before. No ray of enlightenment pierced my darkness. The moon had sailed up above our elms, and was raining down her white and dreamful radiance. I gazed long and earnestly at the mystic blossom, eagerly trying to wile its secret from it, but it was in vain. The answer to the riddle, the key of the puzzle, escaped me. After long or what seemed long and hopeless waiting, I had to turn away baffled, and retrace my steps across the ghostly white open spaces, and through the ghostly black shadows to the house. Up the dark stairs I climbed to my room. It was exactly as I had left it, only lighter, silent

and empty. The shadow of the window-frames lay in a cross-bar pattern, black and white upon the floor. There was even a patch of wan radiance upon the bed-quilt. I looked out of the window, trying if at this distance and by the aid of the now powerful moon, I could distinguish the strange new lily, but it was too far off. So at last, I unwillingly threw off my dressing-gown, and again lay down, meaning to await in bewildered wakefulness the coming of the morning, when I could correct by the help of daylight the errors and delusions of the night. But strange to say, almost before my head was well laid on the pillow, I was asleep again. For how long, who shall say? There is nothing more difficult to measure than the periods of sleep. I had been too preoccupied to ascertain at what hour I had returned to the house, nor at my waking did it even occur to me to think of the length of my slumber. For I awoke again, precisely as I had done before, without start or jump or heart-throbbing; woke to find myself once more sitting up in bed and listening, listening to the same voice, monotonously mournful, that had spoken to me before, and that was now a second time addressing me in precisely the same words: "Your brother!—your brother!—your brother!"

The room, which before had not been really dark, was now almost quite light. Besides the moon, which still sailed high, the dawn was breaking—in June, there is virtually no night—and had there been any person, any form or apparition of any kind in the room, I must have perceived it. But in this case hearing drew no aid from sight. It was quite as impossible as before for me to decide whence the sound came. It was neither from above nor below, nor did it seem to proceed from any one point of the compass more than another. It was a voice, that was all. It was neither loud nor low, it was neither soft nor harsh. It was a voice and it was sorrowful. That was all you could certainly say of it. It repeated the words as before, three times: "Your brother!—your brother!—your brother!" And I as before, still strangely stout-hearted, but in a passion of haste and eagerness, answered without any such interval as I had let elapse on the former occasion, staring out the while vaguely, for I did not know in which direction to look into the still and vacant chamber, where the two lights—the one that must wax and the one that must wane—were contending: "My brother! what about my brother?" Again there was a little pause, as there had been before, and then the voice sounded again, vague and sad through the room: "Go to your wardrobe, and you will find a yellow ribbon striped with brown, and then you will know!"

I am not sure that I had not expected a repetition of the former words—to be again bidden to go and seek the lily; but at this new

injunction, I remained for a few moments awed and still, waiting perhaps for something more to follow. But nothing came. "A yellow ribbon striped with brown!" It flashed upon me that I had no such ribbon in my possession. I ran over in my head my simple and limited stock of personal adornments. I could remember among them none such. I was perfectly convinced that I owned no such ribbon. But then, on the other hand, I had been as firmly convinced that there was no such lily in the garden as the one that I had not only seen with my own eyes, but also touched and smelt there. I sprang out of bed and ran to my wardrobe. It was composed of a hanging press for gowns on one side, and drawers on the other. With feverish haste I pulled out every drawer, beginning at the bottom. To reach the higher ones I had to mount upon a chair. I had pulled them all out except one, and had eagerly turned over and rummaged their contents, without finding anything that I did not already know to be there. Only one more drawer remained to be examined! The probabilities were twenty to one that it also would be found to be empty of what I sought, or rather of what I anxiously sought *not* to find. I drew a heavy breath of relief at the thought that this time the voice had spoken falsely, and that therefore even if I heard it again and yet again repeat its melancholy message, I might dismiss it from my thoughts as some curious form of aural delusion. I hurriedly drew out the top drawer, and the first thing that met my eye, lying above everything else, and unrolled so as to stretch across almost the whole width of the drawer, lay a ribbon—a yellow ribbon striped with brown, a ribbon that I had assuredly never been possessed of, or even seen before! There could be no mistake as to its colours. Momently the morning was broadening across the world, and the two tints were so distinct, the stripes so clearly marked, that error was impossible. I took it out and let it fall across my fingers. No! I had never seen it before. As to how it came there, or whence it came, I could hazard no conjecture. "Go to your wardrobe, and you will find a yellow ribbon striped with brown, and then you will know!" But I had gone to my wardrobe; I held the ribbon in my hand, and still I knew not. The message of the ribbon was as dark to me as had been that of the flower. As I so stood, in even more hopeless bewilderment than I had stood in the garden, painfully striving to find the moral of this twice-repeated enigma, a bird—some little finch—struck up the first few notes of his sleepy dawn song. I listened eagerly to him, thinking that perhaps he might give me the key to the riddle. But in his little song there was nothing but joy—joy at the coming of another day; joy at being alive; joy at being a little garden finch. He could not help me. Neither could the widening morning red, nor the awakening flowers. None of them could help me. By-

and-by I laid down the ribbon in despair, carefully replacing it exactly as I had found it. I closed the drawer, got down from the chair, shut the wardrobe, and went back to bed. This time I was resolved that sleep should not again overtake nor expose me to the possibility of being again aroused by that tormenting riddle-speaking voice. And indeed, so vividly, agitatedly wakeful was I, that it seemed most unlikely that I should again lapse into slumber. And yet as before, scarce had my head touched the pillow, before I was sound asleep again.

Next time that I woke, the June sun was blazing aloft; for the one sleepy finch, a score of blackbirds and thrushes and linnets were making their heavenly din, and my maid was offering me my morning tea. I took it drowsily, but before I had tasted it—the act of sitting up having fully aroused me—the incidents of the night rushed back on my mind. Hastily thrusting aside the tray, I jumped out of bed, and running to the wardrobe, opened it, climbed up on a chair, and pulled out the top drawer, in which I had so plainly seen the ribbon lying; not only seen but touched and handled it. There was no brown-and-yellow ribbon there. Then I pulled out hastily all the others. Neither in any of them was there such a ribbon; nor, although I clearly recollected having overturned and displaced their contents, was there any least trace of such overturning and displacing. Everything lay neat and orderly as was its wont. I was feverishly exploring the bottom drawer, when my maid in a voice, through which her astonishment at my unwonted procedure plainly pierced, asked me “What I was looking for.” I answered, “Nothing, or at least, re-closing the wardrobe as I spoke, “nothing that I was likely to find.” I dressed in feverish haste—usually I was of a lazy habit; lay long and was hard to rouse—and in half an hour from the time at which I was called, I was racing across the sward to the bed that had held the mystic flower. What a different garden it was to the midnight one! holding no secrets in its frank and sunny breast, and sung to by what sweet and practised minstrels! I reached the bed, but I could see no lily. In the night, as I remembered, it was the very first object that had struck my sight.

It was impossible to overlook it, even in that comparatively faint light; but now, even with strong daylight helping me, I could find no trace of it. I searched through the whole large bed, pushing even between the Gueldres rose and mock-orange bushes, but it was not there. There were peonies—huge red ones, pale pink ones—that seemed as if they were trying to be mistaken for great roses; there was weigelia, delicate as apple-blossom; there were irises; there were Canterbury-bells; there were lupins—but there was no yellow lily striped with brown. As I still—though now convinced that it was

in vain—peered and pushed aside leaves and blossoms, the voice of Alice, who had come suddenly up behind, startled me:

“What are you looking for?”

“Nothing,” I answered hurriedly, stepping back on to the grass again.

“Have you lost a ring or a glove?” inquired she, looking at me with some attention, for I suppose I appeared flurried and disordered.

“No,” I replied, “I have lost nothing; at least”—casting one more fruitless glance around—“nothing that I am likely to find.”

Neither flower nor ribbon! Must it then have been only a dream? At first I rejected scornfully this explanation. Had ever dream such consistency? Did ever dream move with such apparent coherence from its beginning to its close? In it had been none of the strange starts and freaks that are always occurring in the dream-world. In it there had been nothing *décousu*; no leaps from the probable to the entirely impossible; no metamorphosis of myself into some one else; no unexplained transition from here to there, from now to then, such as have abounded in every dream—even the most vivid and life-like ones—that I have ever previously had. And yet, as the day wore on, the suspicion deepened, changed at last into a conviction, that it was a dream. I had never awakened really. I had never trodden the midnight garden, or opened my wardrobe doors. All the time that I imagined I had been so doing, I had been in point of fact resting quietly on my bed; possibly some awkward way of lying, some uneasiness of posture, had produced the phenomena that I have described. I spoke of my dream, if it was a dream, to no one, not even to Alice. Some strange reluctance tied my tongue. But I went heavily and ill at ease all through the day. It was never out of my head. I puzzled over its enigma from early morning until night again fell, and bedtime returned. The heat had moderated and the air was fresher. Tired and yet excited, I lay down. I closed my eyes, dreading a repetition of the vision (though, indeed, that is a misnomer as there was nothing to be seen), and yet nervously hoping for some continuation of it that might give me the clue to guide me through its labyrinth—that might give me a reassuring solution of its riddle. But none such came. I had difficulty in falling asleep at all at first, so hopelessly alert and at work seemed my brain; but gradually lassitude got the better of my excitement, and I slept. But no trace of any dream disturbed or varied my deep slumber. Nor on any of the succeeding nights did I hear any repetition of that strange and melancholy voice. It seemed to have had leave to speak but that once. And as the days and hours passed by, time's influence, invariably numbing, deadened the impression that at first

had been so keen. After a while I tried to avoid thinking of it, as of something painful, unnerving, and yet meaningless, nor did I mention it to any living soul. To relate it would have seemed to give it added importance.

And so a week of our placid and uniform life slipped away. The weather was cool again, and we played tennis from morning to night. At first the same sentiment which had made us leave Dick's chair vacant, prevented us from supplying his place in the game; but as this principle could not be carried out through life, that whatever he had done must henceforth, until his return, be left undone, we by-and-by associated to ourselves, as occasion offered, a neighbouring curate, or squire, and so, all day long, the balls flew, and the grass waxed ever barer, balder, and more worn, where our persevering feet continually trampled it. But still, of course, the Indian mail remained the event of our lives. We were so much behind the time and lived so deep-sunk in the country, that we had no second post, nor would my father take any steps to obtain one, as he said that once a day was quite enough to be pestered with letters, and that, for his part, if it were once a week instead, he could very well put up with it. But it was by the second post that the Indian letters came to our post town, and on the mail day it was an invariable custom that some of us should drive in to fetch them. To send a servant for them would have balked our impatience and would besides have seemed a disrespect to them. So, whether it shone or rained, Alice and I, as surely as the post day came, might be seen whipping up our old pony into unwonted and unwilling speed along the road to —.

On that day it shone; shone so strongly that Alice, who drove, asked me for a share of my large sunshade; and beneath it we trotted along in happy expectancy. The air blew heavily sweet from the bean field (until that day I loved the smell of a blossoming bean field), and the birds sang—oh, *how* they sang!

“For there was none of them that feigned
To sing, for each of them him pained
To find out merry crafty notes,
They ne spared not their throats.”

When we reached the post office, the letters were still being sorted, so we had to wait a few moments. But we were rewarded for our waiting. A letter in the beloved handwriting, and with the usual postmark, was soon put into our eager hands. We waited to open it till we were out of the little town, and off the cobble stones, so that we might comfortably enjoy it, the one who read without raising her voice, and the one who listened without straining her ears. It was addressed to Alice, though of course, like all his letters, meant for the

benefit of the whole family. We were always glad when the letters were to either of us, as they were usually of a lighter and more conversational type than those directed to our parents—less about the customs and habits of the natives, the resources of the country, &c., and more about the gossip of the station, the picnics, the quarrels of the regimental ladies, the flirtations. This was a particularly good specimen of our favourite kind, and as we passed along, the old pony dropped unrebuked into a leisurely rolling amble, the reins fell loose on his back while Alice and I together stooped our heads over the page in the vain effort to decipher an illegible but obviously important word on which the point of a whole sentence turned. We were so absorbed that we did not perceive a telegraph boy who was marching along the dusty road in the same direction as ourselves, until recognising our pony chaise, he made signs to us to stop, holding out, as he did so, one of those familiar orange missives that alternately order dinners and announce deaths. I took it, though with no particular misgiving: people employ the telegraph wires for such harmless trifles nowadays. It was addressed—not to any of us—but to

“MRS. GRAINGER,

“Housekeeper at — Hall.”

Mrs. Grainger was one of those servants who—rail, and justly rail as one may at the class of domestic servants in general—are yet so numerous that one can scarcely ever take up a *Times* without reading the lamented death of one of these chronicled in its obituary. She had nursed us all three lovingly: Dick first, and most lovingly, and was now almost as well known to our friends—to some even of Dick’s friends, notably to his *alter ego*, Major —, who not long before our boy’s departure had been paying us a visit—as we ourselves.

“It is for Na Na!” I said (we still called her by that infantile name). “I hope that it is no bad news for her; she was rather frightened by the last accounts of her consumptive niece.”

“You had better open it, at all events,” answered Alice; “it may require an answer.”

So I opened it, she looking over my shoulder.

“From MAJOR —,

to

MRS. GRAINGER,

“—, India.

“Housekeeper at — Hall,

“—shire.

“Mr. — attacked by tiger, out shooting. Killed on the spot. Break it to his family. Have written.”

I read it through at first without any comprehension, so totally unexpectant was I, so prepossessed with the idea that the telegram did not concern us at all, but contained ill news for Na Na; and when comprehension did come, there came with it utter incredulity. It was nonsense! Why, it was not two minutes since we had been reading his letter; laughing over his account of the misadventures that had happened at the picnic he had been at; puzzling over the ill-written word! How *could* he write letters and be dead?

I snatched up the letter, and frantically turned back to the date on the first page. It was a month ago! The telegram was not twenty-four hours old!

Then I believe I gave a dreadful yelling laugh, and then God had pity on me—indeed I needed it—and I remember no more.

But that was what my dream meant, I suppose. The yellow lily striped with brown; the yellow ribbon striped with brown. They were figures and foreshadowings of the cruel striped beast that tore our boy.

* * * * *

The singular dream and its solution related above are true. Only the dressing-up is fictitious.

A True Ghost Story.

THE tale I am about to tell is a simple statement of facts, without embellishment or explanation.

My wife's mother had in her service a coachman named Philips, apparently an old bachelor, but in reality a widower with one son. The name of the son was James Henry Philips, who had been brought up by friends at a distance, and was apprenticed to a trade in London. With the exception of his own father, no one in our neighbourhood but myself was aware of his existence. Nor did I again know much about him, for his father had only twice casually mentioned him to me, though we were on very friendly terms together.

After a time, however, Philips married again, and I performed the ceremony; but the son was not there, nor did I even notice his absence. In fact, he had almost entirely slipped out of my mind, for with a large seaside parish on my hands, of which I was curate, my time and attention were fully taken up with matters nearer home. I mention this, lest in the course of the following story my readers should chance to think that a deep impression, previously made on my own mind, had predisposed me to see what I saw, and afterwards to regard it in a supernatural light. I cannot, therefore, too emphatically repeat that I knew next to nothing about James Henry Philips, my friend's son; that I had never seen him; and seldom, if ever, thought of him at all.

The next thing I have to state is that when Philips married again, he gave up his situation as coachman, and settled with his wife in a street in my parish, called Dunton Street.

And here it is that the extraordinary part of my story begins. And yet, after all, I have no midnight horrors to relate; but only something very curious and strange, and that happened too in the broad face of day.

It was a hot and bright afternoon in summer, and I was unrobing in the vestry after service in the church, when my parish clerk, a white-headed old man, with a merry mischievous twinkle in his eye, ushered in a lady, desirous, as he meaningly said, of an interview with me in private. Her errand was this. She had heard that there was sickness in the town, and for her children's sake (and they were

legion), she wished to know if the report were true. If it were, for she was but a visitor, she would seek for lodgings elsewhere. I told her that I would make inquiries, and let her know, if she would kindly leave with me her name and address. She gave her name, which I have forgotten: let us say it was Mrs. Timidity: and her address was Dunton Street, a place already mentioned in this narrative.

Now in Dunton Street there lived at that time, amongst many others, three persons in particular: viz., my friend Philips; my new acquaintance, Mrs. Timidity; and an old lady named Jackson, with whom I was engaged that very afternoon to drink tea. Off then I set, after service in church, like a boy let loose from school, for Mrs. Jackson's house in Dunton Street, which I very soon reached. As if it were only yesterday, I remember perfectly well walking down the broad bright street in the broad bright afternoon. And in going to Mrs. Jackson's abode, I had to pass the house of Philips. I remarked indeed that all his window blinds were drawn carefully down, as if to screen his furniture, of which his wife was inordinately proud, from the despoiling blaze of the afternoon sun. I smiled inwardly at the thought. I then left the road, stepped on to the side pavement, and looked over the area rails, into the front court below. Why I did so, I cannot exactly say. A young man, dressed in dark clothes, and without a hat, and apparently about twenty years of age, was standing at the door beneath the front steps. On the instant, from his likeness to my friend Philips, I seemed to recognise his son. We both stood and looked very hard at each other. Suddenly, however, he advanced to that part of the area which was immediately below where I was standing, fixed on me a wide, dilated, winkless sort of stare, and halted. The desire to speak was evidently legible on his face, though nothing audible escaped from his lips. But his eyes spoke; every feature in his countenance spoke, spoke, as it were, a silent language, in which reproach and pain seemed equally intermingled. At first I was startled; then I began to feel angry. "Why," I said to myself, "does he look at me in that manner?" At last, annoyance prevailing over surprise, I turned away with the half muttered thought: "He certainly knows me by sight as a friend of his father, and yet has not the civility to salute me. I will call on the first opportunity and ask his reason for such behaviour." I then pursued my way to Mrs. Jackson's house, and thought no more of what had just occurred.

On the next day, Monday, true to my appointment, I called on Mrs. Timidity in Dunton Street, and relieved her mind of all unnecessary fears. On my way home, however, finding myself thus inadvertently in the neighbourhood of Philips's house, and feeling certain in my own mind that it was Philips's son I had seen, I determined to call on him at once. My hand indeed was actually on

the knocker to seek admittance, when the thought struck me that I had another engagement for five o'clock ; and as it was close upon that hour, I gently replaced the knocker, saying to myself as I turned again to the street, that I would make a point of seeing the young man before the week was out.

Next day was Tuesday ; and out of sight was out of mind. On Wednesday it was my turn to officiate at the local cemetery. I went there in due course, and read the service over a little girl ; and was preparing for instant departure, when the sexton informed me that there was another funeral still, but that the hearse and mourners had not yet arrived. On my asking who was to be buried, I was told that it was a young man from my quarter of the town, who had died of consumption. I cannot give the reason, but immediately I felt startled and ill at ease. It was not that I had the least suspicion that anything extraordinary was about to happen. I had quite forgotten young Philips. The feeling which I think was uppermost in my mind was annoyance at the fact that any one should have died, of such a slow disease, in my parish, but without my knowledge. Accordingly, I waited impatiently for the arrival of the funeral *cortège*, which I beheld approaching in the distance. As soon, then, as it stopped at the cemetery gates, I asked without delay for the registrar's certificate. I took it at once with eager, outstretched hand ; I opened it immediately ; and to my surprise, my horror—I was going to say, terror—my eyes fell on the words, "James Henry Philips, aged twenty-one years." I felt stunned. I could scarcely believe my own senses ; and my surprise was increased, not to say my alarm, when I looked up and saw Philips and his wife as the mourners. With an effort, however, I mastered my feelings for the moment ; and with calm lips, but with an agitated heart and confused thoughts, I read the service through to the end.

Need I say that for all that day, and for some time afterwards, I felt strangely nervous and upset ? My mind was a chaos of doubt. I perpetually asked myself the question, wherein my fault lay, that the young man should have looked at me in such a manner, that the mere recollection of his glance should pierce me to the very soul ? Was I the victim of my own imagination, building up unnecessary horrors out of a chance coincidence, singular indeed, but in no sense preternatural ? Had I known of his presence in the town, and yet had left him unvisited in his illness, then I could have understood the reproach and pain visible in his face, and could at once have felt that he had come to me with a message of blame from another world. Oh, how that look of his haunted me, mingling with my dreams, and disturbing my waking thoughts ! Nay, to this very day, though years have passed, I cannot recall the story without a shudder and a thrill.

Under the pressure of such feelings, it may readily be imagined that I lost but little time before calling on Philips and his wife. I found the latter at home, and what she had to say only made me more uncomfortable still. James Henry Philips bore such a close resemblance to his father, that all who saw him remarked on the striking likeness. In addition to this, during the last three months of his life, which he spent under his father's roof, he had often wondered that I did not come to see him. His longing for an interview with me had been most intense; and every time he saw me pass the house without going in, he had both felt and expressed a keen disappointment. In fact, he died terribly in earnest, wishing in vain to the last that I would come. The thought pierced me through and through. I had not gone to him, but he had come to me. And yet I would have gone, if I had but known. I blame the doctor for not telling me; I blame the parents for not sending for me; and with that awful look he gave me in my remembrance, I blame myself, though I cannot tell why.

But there is something else I have to tell in order to make this sad short story complete. James Henry Philips had died on the Thursday before the Sunday on which I had seen him. He had died too in the front room, on a level with the area, into which its window opened. He had also lain there till the Wednesday following, awaiting burial. His corpse then was lying in that very room on that very Sunday, and at the very moment too, when I had seen his living likeness, as it were, in the area outside. Nobody, I found, had passed through the area that day; the door there had been locked and unused all the Sunday. The very milkman, the only person who called, had come by the front steps to the house; and Philips and his wife were the only inmates at the time.

Finally, let me observe again that all this happened in the full blaze of day, and so I leave my story with my reader. In short, the tale in itself is so extraordinary, and I know it to be so true, that its plain and bare recital is its own very best witness.*

GERRARD LEWIS (Clerk).

* In the above narrative the proper names alone are fictitious.

The Captain of the 'Pole-star.'

[Being an extract from the journal of JOHN McALISTER RAY, student of medicine, kept by him during the six months' voyage in the Arctic Seas, of the steam-whaler '*Pole-star*,' of Dundee, Captain Nicholas Craigie.]

September 11th. Lat. $81^{\circ} 40'$ N.; Long. 2° E.—Still lying-to amid enormous ice fields. The one which stretches away to the north of us, and to which our ice-anchor is attached, cannot be smaller than an English county. To the right and left unbroken sheets extend to the horizon. This morning the mate reported that there were signs of pack ice to the southward. Should this form of sufficient thickness to bar our return, we shall be in a position of danger, as the food, I hear, is already running somewhat short. It is late in the season and the nights are beginning to reappear. This morning I saw a star twinkling just over the fore-yard—the first since the beginning of May. There is considerable discontent among the crew, many of whom are anxious to get back home to be in time for the herring season, when labour always commands a high price upon the Scotch coast. As yet their displeasure is only signified by sullen countenances and black looks, but I heard from the second mate this afternoon that they contemplated sending a deputation to the Captain to explain their grievance. I much doubt how he will receive it, as he is a man of fierce temper, and very sensitive about anything approaching to an infringement of his rights. I shall venture after dinner to say a few words to him upon the subject. I have always found that he will tolerate from me what he would resent from any other member of the crew. Amsterdam Island, at the north-west corner of Spitzbergen, is visible upon our starboard quarter—a rugged line of volcanic rocks, intersected by white seams, which represent glaciers. It is curious to think that at the present moment there is probably no human being nearer to us than the Danish settlements in the south of Greenland—a good nine hundred miles as the crow flies. A captain takes a great responsibility upon himself when he risks his vessel under such circumstances. No whaler has ever remained in these latitudes till so advanced a period of the year.

9 P.M.—I have spoken to Captain Craigie, and though the result has been hardly satisfactory, I am bound to say that he listened to what I had to say very quietly and even deferentially. When I had finished he put on that air of iron determination which I have

frequently observed upon his face, and paced rapidly backwards and forwards across the narrow cabin for some minutes. At first I feared that I had seriously offended him, but he dispelled the idea by sitting down again, and putting his hand upon my arm with a gesture which almost amounted to a caress. There was a depth of tenderness too in his wild dark eyes which surprised me considerably. "Look here, Doctor," he said, "I'm sorry I ever took you—I am indeed—and I would give fifty pounds this minute to see you standing safe upon the Dundee quay. It's hit or miss with me this time. There are fish to the north of us. How dare you shake your head, sir, when I tell you I saw them blowing from the masthead!"—this in a sudden burst of fury, though I was not conscious of having shown any signs of doubt. "Two and twenty fish in as many minutes as I am a living man, and not one under ten foot.* Now, Doctor, do you think I can leave the country when there is only one infernal strip of ice between me and my fortune. If it came on to blow from the north to-morrow we could fill the ship and be away before the frost could catch us. If it came on to blow from the south—well, I suppose, the men are paid for risking their lives, and as for myself it matters but little to me, for I have more to bind me to the other world than to this one. I confess that I am sorry for *you*, though. I wish I had old Angus Tait who was with me last voyage, for he was a man that would never be missed, and you—you said once that you were engaged, did you not?"

"Yes," I answered, snapping the spring of the locket which hung from my watch-chain, and holding up the little vignette of Flora.

"Blast you!" he yelled, springing out of his seat, with his very beard bristling with passion. "What is your happiness to me? What have I to do with her that you must dangle her photograph before my eyes?" I almost thought that he was about to strike me in the frenzy of his rage, but with another imprecation he dashed open the door of the cabin and rushed out upon deck, leaving me considerably astonished at his extraordinary violence. It is the first time that he has ever shown me anything but courtesy and kindness. I can hear him pacing excitedly up and down overhead as I write these lines.

I should like to give a sketch of the character of this man, but it seems presumptuous to attempt such a thing upon paper, when the idea in my own mind is at best a vague and uncertain one. Several times I have thought that I grasped the clue which might explain it, but only to be disappointed by his presenting himself in some new light which would upset all my conclusions. It may be that no

* A whale is measured among whalers not by the length of its body, but by the length of its whalebone.

human eye but my own shall ever rest upon these lines, yet as a psychological study I shall attempt to leave some record of Captain Nicholas Craigie.

A man's outer case generally gives some indication of the soul within. The Captain is tall and well-formed, with dark, handsome face, and a curious way of twitching his limbs, which may arise from nervousness, or be simply an outcome of his excessive energy. His jaw and whole cast of countenance is manly and resolute, but the eyes are the distinctive feature of his face. They are of the very darkest hazel, bright and eager, with a singular mixture of recklessness in their expression, and of something else which I have sometimes thought was more allied with horror than any other emotion. Generally the former predominated, but on occasions, and more particularly when he was thoughtfully inclined, the look of fear would spread and deepen until it imparted a new character to his whole countenance. It is at these times that he is most subject to tempestuous fits of anger, and he seems to be aware of it, for I have known him lock himself up so that no one might approach him until his dark hour was passed. He sleeps badly, and I have heard him shouting during the night, but his room is some little distance from mine, and I could never distinguish the words which he said.

This is one phase of his character, and the most disagreeable one. It is only through my close association with him, thrown together as we are day after day, that I have observed it. Otherwise he is an agreeable companion, well-read and entertaining, and as gallant a seaman as ever trod a deck. I shall not easily forget the way in which he handled the ship when we were caught by a gale among the loose ice at the beginning of April. I have never seen him so cheerful, and even hilarious, as he was that night as he paced backwards and forwards upon the bridge amid the flashing of the lightning and the howling of the wind. He has told me several times that the thought of death was a pleasant one to him, which is a sad thing for a young man to say; he cannot be much more than thirty, though his hair and moustache are already slightly grizzled. Some great sorrow must have overtaken him and blighted his whole life. Perhaps I should be the same if I lost my Flora—God knows! I think if it were not for her that I should care very little whether the wind blew from the north or the south to-morrow. There, I hear him come down the companion and he has locked himself up in his room, which shows that he is still in an amiable mood. And so to bed, as old Pepys would say, for the candle is burning down (we have to use them now since the nights are closing in), and the steward has turned in, so there are no hopes of another one.

September 12th.—Calm clear day, and still lying in the same

position. What wind there is comes from the south-east, but it is very slight. Captain is in a better humour, and apologised to me at breakfast for his rudeness. He still looks somewhat distraught, however, and retains that wild look in his eyes which in a Highlander would mean that he was "fey"—at least so our chief engineer remarked to me, and he has some reputation among the Celtic portion of our crew as a seer and expounder of omens.

It is strange that superstition should have obtained such mastery over this hard-headed and practical race. I could not have believed to what an extent it is carried had I not observed it for myself. We have had a perfect epidemic of it this voyage, until I have felt inclined to serve out rations of sedatives and nerve tonics with the Saturday allowance of grog. The first symptom of it was that shortly after leaving Shetland the men at the wheel used to complain that they heard plaintive cries and screams in the wake of the ship, as if something were following it and were unable to overtake it. This fiction has been kept up during the whole voyage, and on dark nights at the beginning of the seal-fishing it was only with great difficulty that men could be induced to do their spell. No doubt what they heard was either the creaking of the rudder-chains, or the cry of some passing sea-bird. I have been fetched out of bed several times to listen to it, but I need hardly say that I was never able to distinguish anything unnatural. The men, however, are so absurdly positive upon the subject that it is hopeless to argue with them. I mentioned the matter to the Captain once, but to my surprise he took it very gravely, and indeed appeared to be considerably disturbed by what I told him. I should have thought that he at least would have been above such vulgar delusions.

All this disquisition upon superstition leads me up to the fact that Mr. Manson, our second mate, saw a ghost last night—or, at least, says that he did, which of course is the same thing. It is quite refreshing to have some new topic of conversation after the eternal routine of bears and whales which has served us for so many months. Manson swears the ship is haunted, and that he would not stay in her a day if he had any other place to go to. Indeed the fellow is honestly frightened, and I had to give him some chloral and bromide of potassium this morning to steady him down. He seemed quite indignant when I suggested that he had been having an extra glass the night before, and I was obliged to pacify him by keeping as grave a countenance as possible during his story, which he certainly narrated in a very straightforward and matter-of-fact way.

"I was on the bridge," he said, "about four bells in the middle watch, just when the night was at its darkest. There was a bit of a moon, but the clouds were blowing across it so that you

couldn't see far from the ship. John McLeod, the harpooner, came aft from the foc'sle-head and reported a strange noise on the star-board bow. I went forrard and we both heard it, sometimes like a bairn crying and sometimes like a wench in pain. I've been seventeen years to the country and I never heard seal, old or young, make a sound like that. As we were standing there on the foc'sle-head the moon came out from behind a cloud, and we both saw a sort of white figure moving across the ice field in the same direction that we had heard the cries. We lost sight of it for a while, but it came back on the port bow, and we could just make it out like a shadow on the ice. I sent a hand aft for the rifles, and McLeod and I went down on to the pack, thinking that maybe it might be a bear. When we got on the ice I lost sight of McLeod, but I pushed on in the direction where I could still hear the cries. I followed them for a mile or maybe more, and then running round a hummock I came right on to the top of it standing and waiting for me seemingly. I don't know what it was. It wasn't a bear any way. It was tall and white and straight, and if it wasn't a man nor a woman, I'll stake my davy it was something worse. I made for the ship as hard as I could run, and precious glad I was to find myself aboard. I signed articles to do my duty by the ship, and on the ship I'll stay, but you don't catch me on the ice again after sundown."

That is his story given as far as I can in his own words. I fancy what he saw must, in spite of his denial, have been a young bear erect upon its hind legs, an attitude which they often assume when alarmed. In the uncertain light this would bear a resemblance to a human figure, especially to a man whose nerves were already somewhat shaken. Whatever it may have been, the occurrence is unfortunate, for it has produced a most unpleasant effect upon the crew. Their looks are more sullen than before and their discontent more open. The double grievance of being debarred from the herring fishing and of being detained in what they choose to call a haunted vessel, may lead them to do something rash. Even the harpooners, who are the oldest and steadiest among them, are joining in the general agitation.

Apart from this absurd outbreak of superstition, things are looking rather more cheerful. The pack which was forming to the south of us has partly cleared away, and the water is so warm as to lead me to believe that we are lying in one of those branches of the gulf-stream which run up between Greenland and Spitzbergen. There are numerous small Medusæ and sealemons about the ship, with abundance of shrimps, so that there is every possibility of "fish" being sighted. Indeed one was seen blowing about dinner-time, but in such a position that it was impossible for the boats to follow it.

September 13th.—Had an interesting conversation with the chief mate Mr. Milne upon the bridge. It seems that our Captain is as great an enigma to the seamen, and even to the owners of the vessel, as he has been to me. Mr. Milne tells me that when the ship is paid off, upon returning from a voyage, Captain Craigie disappears, and is not seen again until the approach of another season, when he walks quietly into the office of the company, and asks whether his services will be required. He has no friend in Dundee, nor does any one pretend to be acquainted with his early history. His position depends entirely upon his skill as a seaman, and the name for courage and coolness which he had earned in the capacity of mate, before being entrusted with a separate command. The unanimous opinion seems to be that he is not a Scotchman, and that his name is an assumed one. Mr. Milne thinks that he has devoted himself to whaling simply for the reason that it is the most dangerous occupation which he could select, and that he courts death in every possible manner. He mentioned several instances of this, one of which is rather curious, if true. It seems that on one occasion he did not put in an appearance at the office, and a substitute had to be selected in his place. That was at the time of the last Russian and Turkish war. When he turned up again next spring he had a puckered wound in the side of his neck which he used to endeavour to conceal with his cravat. Whether the mate's inference that he had been engaged in the war is true or not I cannot say. It was certainly a strange coincidence.

The wind is veering round in an easterly direction, but is still very slight. I think the ice is lying closer than it did yesterday. As far as the eye can reach on every side there is one wide expanse of spotless white, only broken by an occasional rift or the dark shadow of a hummock. To the south there is the narrow lane of blue water which is our sole means of escape, and which is closing up every day. The Captain is taking a heavy responsibility upon himself. I hear that the tank of potatoes has been finished, and even the biscuits are running short, but he preserves the same impassible countenance and spends the greater part of the day at the crow's nest, sweeping the horizon with his glass. His manner is very variable, and he seems to avoid my society, but there has been no repetition of the violence which he showed the other night.

7.30 P.M.—My deliberate opinion is that we are commanded by a madman. Nothing else can account for the extraordinary vagaries of Captain Craigie. It is fortunate that I have kept this journal of our voyage, as it will serve to justify us in case we have to put him under any sort of restraint, a step which I should only consent to as a last resource. Curiously enough it was he himself who suggested lunacy and not mere eccentricity as the secret of his strange conduct.

He was standing upon the bridge about an hour ago, peering as usual through his glass, while I was walking up and down the quarterdeck. The majority of the men were below at their tea, for the watches have not been regularly kept of late. Tired of walking, I leaned against the bulwarks, and admired the mellow glow cast by the sinking sun upon the great ice fields which surround us. I was suddenly aroused from the reverie into which I had fallen by a hoarse voice at my elbow, and starting round I found that the Captain had descended and was standing by my side. He was staring out over the ice with an expression in which horror, surprise, and something approaching to joy were contending for the mastery. In spite of the cold, great drops of perspiration were coursing down his forehead and he was evidently fearfully excited. His limbs twitched like those of a man upon the verge of an epileptic fit, and the lines about his mouth were drawn and hard.

"Look!" he gasped, scizing me by the wrist, but still keeping his eyes upon the distant ice, and moving his head slowly in a horizontal direction, as if following some object which was moving across the field of vision. "Look! There, man, there! Between the hummocks! Now coming out from behind the far one! You see her, you *must* see her! There still! Flying from me, by God, flying from me—and gone!"

He uttered the last two words in a whisper of concentrated agony which shall never fade from my remembrance. Clinging to the ratlines he endeavoured to climb up upon the top of the bulwarks as if in the hope of obtaining a last glance at the departing object. His strength was not equal to the attempt, however, and he staggered back against the saloon skylights, where he leaned panting and exhausted. His face was so livid that I expected him to become unconscious, so lost no time in leading him down the companion, and stretching him upon one of the sofas in the cabin. I then poured him out some brandy which I held to his lips, and which had a wonderful effect upon him, bringing the blood back into his white face and steadying his poor shaking limbs. He raised himself up upon his elbow, and looking round to see that we were alone, he beckoned to me to come and sit beside him.

"You saw it, didn't you?" he asked, still in the same subdued awesome tone so foreign to the nature of the man.

"No, I saw nothing."

His head sank back again upon the cushions. "No, he wouldn't without the glass," he murmured. "He couldn't. It was the glass that showed her to me, and then the eyes of love—the eyes of love. I say, Doc, don't let the steward in! He'll think I'm mad. Just bolt the door, will you!"

I rose and did what he had commanded.

He lay quiet for a little, lost in thought apparently, and then raised himself up upon his elbow again, and asked for some more brandy.

"You don't think I am, do you, Doc?" he asked as I was putting the bottle back into the after-locker. "Tell me now, as man to man, do you think that I am mad?"

"I think you have something on your mind," I answered, "which is exciting you and doing you a good deal of harm."

"Right there, lad!" he cried, his eyes sparkling from the effects of the brandy. "Plenty on my mind—plenty! But I can work out the latitude and the longitude, and I can handle my sextant and manage my logarithms. You couldn't prove me mad in a court of law, could you, now?" It was curious to hear the man lying back and coolly arguing out the question of his own sanity.

"Perhaps not," I said, "but still I think you would be wise to get home as soon as you can and settle down to a quiet life for a while."

"Get home, eh?" he muttered with a sneer upon his face. "One word for me and two for yourself, lad. Settle down with Flora—pretty little Flora. Are bad dreams signs of madness?"

"Sometimes," I answered.

"What else? what would be the first symptoms?"

"Pains in the head, noises in the ears, flashes before the eyes, delusions——"

"Ah! what about them?" he interrupted. "What would you call a delusion?"

"Seeing a thing which is not there is a delusion."

"But she *was* there!" he groaned to himself. "She *was* there!" and rising, he unbolted the door and walked with slow and uncertain steps to his own cabin, where I have no doubt that he will remain until to-morrow morning. His system seems to have received a terrible shock, whatever it may have been that he imagined himself to have seen. The man becomes a greater mystery every day, though I fear that the solution which he has himself suggested is the correct one, and that his reason is affected. I do not think that a guilty conscience has anything to do with his behaviour. The idea is a popular one among the officers, and, I believe, the crew; but I have seen nothing to support it. He has not the air of a guilty man, but of one who has had terrible usage at the hands of fortune, and who should be regarded as a martyr rather than a criminal.

The wind is veering round to the south to-night. God help us if it blocks that narrow pass which is our only road to safety! Situated as we are on the edge of the main Arctic pack, or the "barrier" as it is called by the whalers, any wind from the north has the effect of

shredding out the ice around us and allowing our escape, while a wind from the south blows up all the loose ice behind us and hems us in between two packs. God help us, I say again!

September 14th.—Sunday, and a day of rest. My fears have been confirmed, and the thin strip of blue water has disappeared from the southward. Nothing but the great motionless ice fields around us, with their weird hummocks and fantastic pinnacles. There is a deathly silence over their wide expanse which is horrible. No lapping of the waves now, no cries of seagulls or straining of sails, but one deep universal silence in which the murmurs of the seamen, and the creak of their boots upon the white shining deck, seem discordant and out of place. Our only visitor was an Arctic fox, a rare animal upon the pack, though common enough upon the land. He did not come near the ship, however, but after surveying us from a distance fled rapidly across the ice. This was curious conduct, as they generally know nothing of man, and being of an inquisitive nature become so familiar that they are easily captured. Incredible as it may seem, even this little incident produced a bad effect upon the crew. “Yon puir beastie kens mair, aye an’ sees mair nor you nor me!” was the comment of one of the leading harpooners, and the others nodded their acquiescence. It is vain to attempt to argue against such puerile superstition. They have made up their minds that there is a curse upon the ship, and nothing will ever persuade them to the contrary.

The Captain remained in seclusion all day except for about half an hour in the afternoon, when he came out upon the quarterdeck. I observed that he kept his eye fixed upon the spot where the vision of yesterday had appeared, and was quite prepared for another outburst, but none such came. He did not seem to see me although I was standing close beside him. Divine service was read as usual by the chief engineer. It is a curious thing that in whaling vessels the Church of England Prayer-book is always employed, although there is never a member of that Church among either officers or crew. Our men are all Roman Catholics or Presbyterians, the former predominating. Since a ritual is used which is foreign to both, neither can complain that the other is preferred to them, and they listen with all attention and devotion, so that the system has something to recommend it.

A glorious sunset, which made the great fields of ice look like a lake of blood. I have never seen a finer and at the same time more ghastly effect. Wind is veering round. If it will blow twenty-four hours from the north all will yet be well.

September 15th.—To-day is Flora’s birthday. Dear lass! it is well that she cannot see her boy, as she used to call me, shut up among

the ice fields with a crazy captain and a few weeks' provisions. No doubt she scans the shipping list in the *Scotsman* every morning to see if we are reported from Shetland. I have to set an example to the men and look cheery and unconcerned ; but God knows, my heart is very heavy at times.

The thermometer is at nineteen Fahrenheit to-day. There is but little wind, and what there is comes from an unfavourable quarter. Captain is in an excellent humour ; I think he imagines he has seen some other omen or vision, poor fellow, during the night, for he came into my room early in the morning, and stooping down over my bunk whispered, " It wasn't a delusion, Doc, it's all right ! " After breakfast he asked me to find out how much food was left, which the second mate and I proceeded to do. It is even less than we had expected. Forward they have half a tank full of biscuits, three barrels of salt meat, and a very limited supply of coffee beans and sugar. In the after-hold and lockers there are a good many luxuries such as tinned salmon, soups, haricot mutton, &c., but they will go a very short way among a crew of fifty men. There are two barrels of flour in the store-room, and an unlimited supply of tobacco. Altogether there is about enough to keep the men on half rations for eighteen or twenty days—certainly not more. When we reported the state of things to the Captain, he ordered all hands to be piped, and addressed them from the quarterdeck. I never saw him to better advantage. With his tall, well-knit figure and dark animated face, he seemed a man born to command, and he discussed the situation in a cool sailor-like way which showed that while appreciating the danger he had an eye for every loophole of escape.

" My lads," he said, " no doubt you think I brought you into this fix, if it is a fix, and maybe some of you feel bitter against me on account of it. But you must remember that for many a season no ship that comes to the country has brought in as much oil-money as the old *Pole-star*, and every one of you has had his share of it. You can leave your wives behind you in comfort while other poor fellows come back to find their lasses on the parish. If you have to thank me for the one you have to thank me for the other, and we may call it quits. We've tried a bold venture before this and succeeded, so now that we've tried one and failed we've no cause to cry out about it. If the worst comes to the worst, we can make the land across the ice, and lay in a stock of seals which will keep us alive until the spring. It won't come to that, though, for you'll see the Scotch coast again before three weeks are out. At present every man must go on half rations, share and share alike, and no favour to any. Keep up your hearts and you'll pull through this as you've pulled through many a danger before." These few simple words of his had a wonderful

effect upon the crew. His former unpopularity was forgotten, and the old harpooner whom I have already mentioned for his superstition, led off three cheers, which were heartily joined in by all hands.

September 16th.—The wind has veered round to the north during the night, and the ice shows some symptoms of opening out. The men are in a good humour in spite of the short allowance upon which they have been placed. Steam is kept up in the engine-room, that there may be no delay should an opportunity for escape present itself. The Captain is in exuberant spirits, though he still retains that wild "fey" expression which I have already remarked upon. This burst of cheerfulness puzzles me more than his former gloom. I cannot understand it. I think I mentioned in an early part of this journal that one of his oddities is that he never permits any person to enter his cabin, but insists upon making his own bed, such as it is, and performing every other office for himself. To my surprise he handed me the key to-day and requested me to go down there and take the time by his chronometer while he measured the altitude of the sun at noon. It is a bare little room containing a washing-stand and a few books, but little else in the way of luxury, except some pictures upon the walls. The majority of these are small cheap oleographs, but there was one water-colour sketch of the head of a young lady which arrested my attention. It was evidently a portrait, and not one of those fancy types of female beauty which sailors particularly affect. No artist could have evolved from his own mind such a curious mixture of character and weakness. The languid, dreamy eyes with their drooping lashes, and the broad, low brow unruffled by thought or care, were in strong contrast with the clean-cut, prominent jaw, and the resolute set of the lower lip. Underneath it in one of the corners was written "M. B., æt. 19." That any one in the short space of nineteen years of existence could develop such strength of will as was stamped upon her face seemed to me at the time to be well-nigh incredible. She must have been an extraordinary woman. Her features have thrown such a glamour over me that though I had but a fleeting glance at them, I could, were I a draughtsman, reproduce them line for line upon this page of the journal. I wonder what part she has played in our Captain's life. He has hung her picture at the end of his berth so that his eyes continually rest upon it. Were he a less reserved man I should make some remark upon the subject. Of the other things in his cabin there was nothing worthy of mention—uniform coats, a camp stool, small looking-glass, tobacco box and numerous pipes, including an oriental hookah—which by-the-bye gives some colour to Mr. Milne's story about his participation in the war, though the connection may seem rather a distant one.

11.20 P.M.—Captain just gone to bed after a long and interesting conversation on general topics. When he chooses he can be a most fascinating companion, being remarkably well read, and having the power of expressing his opinion forcibly without appearing to be dogmatic. I hate to have my intellectual toes trod upon. He spoke about the nature of the soul and sketched out the views of Aristotle and Plato upon the subject in a masterly manner. He seems to have a leaning for metempsychosis and the doctrines of Pythagoras. In discussing them we touched upon modern spiritualism, and I made some joking allusion to the impostures of Slade, upon which, to my surprise, he warned me most impressively against confusing the innocent with the guilty, and argued that it would be as logical to brand Christianity as an error, because Judas who professed that religion was a villain. He shortly afterwards bade me good-night and retired to his room.

The wind is freshening up, and blows steadily from the north. The nights are as dark now as they are in England. I hope to-morrow may set us free from our frozen fetters.

September 17th.—The Bogie again. Thank Heaven that I have strong nerves! The superstition of these poor fellows, and the circumstantial accounts which they give, with the utmost earnestness and self conviction, would horrify any man not accustomed to their ways. There are many versions of the matter, but the sum-total of them all is that something uncanny has been flitting round the ship all night, and that Sandie McDonald of Peterhead and “lang” Peter Williamson of Shetland saw it, as also did Mr. Milne on the bridge—so having three witnesses, they can make a better case of it than the second mate did. I spoke to Milne after breakfast and told him that he should be above such nonsense, and that as an officer he ought to set the men a better example. He shook his weatherbeaten head ominously, but answered with characteristic caution, “Mebbe aye, mebbe na, Doctor,” he said; “I didna ca’ it a ghaist. I canna’ say I preen my faith in sea bogles an’ the like, though there’s a mony as claims to ha’ seen a’ that and waur. I’m no easy feared, but may be your ain bluid would run a bit cauld, mun, if instead o’ speerin’ about it in daylight ye were wi’ me last night, an’ seed an awfu’ like shape, white an’ gruesome, whiles here, whiles there, an’ it greetin’ and ca’ing in the darkness like a bit lambie that hae lost its mither. Ye would na’ be sae ready to put it a’ doon to auld wives’ clavers then, I’m thinkin.’” I saw it was hopeless to reason with him, so contented myself with begging him as a personal favour to call me up the next time the spectre appeared—a request to which he acceded with many ejaculations expressive of his hopes that such an opportunity might never arise.

As I had hoped, the white desert behind us has become broken by many thin streaks of water which intersect it in all directions. Our latitude to-day was $80^{\circ} 52' N.$, which shows that there is a strong southerly drift upon the pack. Should the wind continue favourable it will break up as rapidly as it formed. At present we can do nothing but smoke and wait and hope for the best. I am rapidly becoming a fatalist. When dealing with such uncertain factors as wind and ice a man can be nothing else. Perhaps it was the wind and sand of the Arabian deserts which gave the minds of the original followers of Mahomet their tendency to bow to kismet.

These spectral alarms have a very bad effect upon the Captain. I feared that it might excite his sensitive mind, and endeavoured to conceal the absurd story from him, but unfortunately he overheard one of the men making an allusion to it, and insisted upon being informed about it. As I had expected, it brought out all his latent lunacy in an exaggerated form. I can hardly believe that this is the same man who discoursed philosophy last night with the most critical acumen, and coolest judgment. He is pacing backwards and forwards upon the quarterdeck like a caged tiger, stopping now and again to throw out his hands with a yearning gesture, and stare impatiently out over the ice. He keeps up a continual mutter to himself, and once he called out, "But a little time, love—but a little time!" Poor fellow, it is sad to see a gallant seaman and accomplished gentleman reduced to such a pass, and to think that imagination and delusion can cow a mind to which real danger was but the salt of life. Was ever a man in such a position as I, between a demented captain and a ghost-seeing mate? I sometimes think I am the only really sane man aboard the vessel—except perhaps the second engineer, who is a kind of ruminant and would care nothing for all the fiends in the Red Sea, so long as they would leave him alone and not disarrange his tools.

The ice is still opening rapidly, and there is every probability of our being able to make a start to-morrow morning. They will think I am inventing when I tell them at home all the strange things that have befallen me.

12 P.M.—I have been a good deal startled, though I feel steadier now, thanks to a stiff glass of brandy. I am hardly myself yet however, as this handwriting will testify. The fact is that I have gone through a very strange experience, and am beginning to doubt whether I was justified in branding every one on board as madmen, because they professed to have seen things which did not seem reasonable to my understanding. Pshaw! I am a fool to let such a trifle unnerve me, and yet coming as it does after all these alarms, it has an additional significance, for I cannot doubt either Mr. Manson's

story or that of the mate, now that I have experienced that which I used formerly to scoff at.

After all it was nothing very alarming—a mere sound, and that was all. I cannot expect that any one reading this, if any one ever should read it, will sympathise with my feelings, or realise the effect which it produced upon me at the time. Supper was over and I had gone on deck to have a quiet pipe before turning in. The night was very dark—so dark that standing under the quarter boat, I was unable to see the officer upon the bridge. I think I have already mentioned the extraordinary silence which prevails in these frozen seas. In other parts of the world, be they ever so barren, there is some slight vibration of the air—some faint hum, be it from the distant haunts of men, or from the leaves of the trees, or the wings of the birds, or even the faint rustle of the grass that covers the ground. One may not actively perceive the sound, and yet if it were withdrawn it would be missed. It is only here in these Arctic seas that stark, unfathomable stillness obtrudes itself upon you in all its gruesome reality. You find your tympanum straining to catch some little murmur and dwelling eagerly upon every accidental sound within the vessel. In this state I was leaning against the bulwarks when there arose from the ice almost directly underneath me, a cry, sharp and shrill, upon the silent air of the night, beginning, as it seemed to me, at a note such as prima donna never reached, and mounting from that ever higher and higher until it culminated in a long wail of agony, which might have been the last cry of a lost soul. The ghastly scream is still ringing in my ears. Grief, unutterable grief, seemed to be expressed in it and a great longing, and yet through it all there was an occasional wild note of exultation. It seemed to come from close beside me, and yet as I glared into the darkness I could make out nothing. I waited some little time, but without hearing any repetition of the sound, so I came below, more shaken than I have ever been in my life before. As I came down the companion I met Mr. Milne coming up to relieve the watch. “Weel, Doctor,” he said, “may be that’s auld wives’ clavers tae? Did ye no hear it skirling? Maybe that’s a supersteection? what d’ye think o’t noo?” I was obliged to apologise to the honest fellow, and acknowledge that I was as puzzled by it as he was. Perhaps to-morrow things may look different. At present I dare hardly write all that I think. Reading it again in days to come, when I have shaken off all these associations, I should despise myself for having been so weak.

September 18th.—Passed a restless and uneasy night still haunted by that strange sound. The Captain does not look as if he had had much repose either, for his face is haggard and his eyes bloodshot. I have not told him of my adventure of last night, nor shall I. He

is already restless and excited, standing up, sitting down, and apparently utterly unable to keep still.

A fine lead appeared in the pack this morning, as I had expected, and we were able to cast off our ice-anchor, and steam about twelve miles in a west-sou'-westerly direction. We were then brought to a halt by a great floe as massive as any which we have left behind us. It bars our progress completely, so we can do nothing but anchor again and wait until it breaks up, which it will probably do within twenty-four hours, if the wind holds. Several bladder-nosed seals were seen swimming in the water, and one was shot, an immense creature more than eleven feet long. They are fierce, pugnacious animals, and are said to be more than a match for a bear. Fortunately they are slow and clumsy in their movements, so that there is little danger in attacking them upon the ice.

The Captain evidently does not think we have seen the last of our troubles, though why he should take a gloomy view of the situation is more than I can fathom, since every one else on board considers that we have had a miraculous escape, and are sure now to reach the open sea.

"I suppose you think it's all right now, Doctor?" he said as we sat together after dinner.

"I hope so," I answered.

"We mustn't be too sure—and yet no doubt you are right. We'll all be in the arms of our own true loves before long, lad, won't we? But we mustn't be too sure—we mustn't be too sure."

He sat silent a little, swinging his leg thoughtfully backwards and forwards. "Look here," he continued. "It's a dangerous place this, even at its best—a treacherous, dangerous place. I have known men cut off very suddenly in a land like this. A slip would do it sometimes—a single slip, and down you go through a crack and only a bubble on the green water to show where it was that you sank. It's a queer thing," he continued with a nervous laugh, "but all the years I've been in this country I never once thought of making a will—not that I have anything to leave in particular, but still when a man is exposed to danger he should have everything arranged and ready—don't you think so?"

"Certainly," I answered, wondering what on earth he was driving at.

"He feels better for knowing it's all settled," he went on. "Now if anything should ever befall me, I hope that you will look after things for me. There is very little in the cabin, but such as it is I should like it to be sold, and the money divided in the same proportion as the oil-money among the crew. The chronometer I wish you to keep yourself as some slight remembrance of our voyage. Of course all this is a mere precaution, but I thought I would take the oppor-

tunity of speaking to you about it. I suppose I might rely upon you if there were any necessity?"

"Most assuredly," I answered; "and since you are taking this step, I may as well——"

"You! you!" he interrupted. *You're* all right. What the devil is the matter with *you*? There, I didn't mean to be peppery, but I don't like to hear a young fellow, that has hardly began life, speculating about death. Go up on deck and get some fresh air into your lungs instead of talking nonsense in the cabin, and encouraging me to do the same."

The more I think of this conversation of ours the less do I like it. Why should the man be settling his affairs at the very time when we seem to be emerging from all danger? There must be some method in his madness. Can it be that he contemplates suicide? I remember that upon one occasion he spoke in a deeply reverent manner of the heinousness of the crime of self-destruction. I shall keep my eye upon him however, and though I cannot obtrude upon the privacy of his cabin, I shall at least make a point of remaining on deck as long as he stays up.

Mr. Milne pooch-poochs my fears, and says it is only the "skipper's little way." He himself takes a very rosy view of the situation. According to him we shall be out of the ice by the day after tomorrow, pass Jan Meyen two days after that, and sight Shetland in little more than a week. I hope he may not be too sanguine. His opinion may be fairly balanced against the gloomy precautions of the Captain, for he is an old and experienced seaman, and weighs his words well before uttering them.

* * * * *

The long-impending catastrophe has come at last. I hardly know what to write about it. The Captain is gone. He may come back to us again alive, but I fear me—I fear me. It is now seven o'clock of the morning of the 19th of September. I have spent the whole night traversing the great ice-floe in front of us with a party of seamen in the hope of coming upon some trace of him, but in vain. I shall try to give some account of the circumstances which attended upon his disappearance. Should any one ever chance to read the words which I put down, I trust they will remember that I do not write from conjecture or from hearsay, but that I, a sane and educated man, am describing accurately what actually occurred before my very eyes. My inferences are my own, but I shall be answerable for the facts.

The Captain remained in excellent spirits after the conversation which I have recorded. He appeared to be nervous and impatient however, frequently changing his position, and moving his limbs in

an aimless choreic way which is characteristic of him at times. In a quarter of an hour he went upon deck seven times, only to descend after a few hurried paces. I followed him each time, for there was something about his face which confirmed my resolution of not letting him out of my sight. He seemed to observe the effect which his movements had produced, for he endeavoured by an over-done hilarity, laughing boisterously at the very smallest of jokes, to quiet my apprehensions.

After supper he went on to the poop once more, and I with him. The night was dark and very still, save for the melancholy soughing of the wind among the spars. A thick cloud was coming up from the north-west, and the ragged tentacles which it threw out in front of it were drifting across the face of the moon, which only shone now and again through a rift in the wrack. The Captain paced rapidly backwards and forwards, and then seeing me still dogging him, he came across and hinted that he thought I should be better below—which I need hardly say had the effect of strengthening my resolution to remain on deck.

I think he forgot about my presence after this, for he stood silently leaning over the taffrail, and peering out across the great desert of snow, part of which lay in shadow, while part glittered mistily in the moonlight. Several times I could see by his movements that he was referring to his watch, and once he muttered a short sentence of which I could only catch the one word "ready." I confess to having felt an eerie feeling creeping over me as I watched the loom of his tall figure through the darkness, and noted how completely he fulfilled the idea of a man who is keeping a tryst. A tryst with whom? Some vague perception began to dawn upon me as I pieced one fact with another, but I was utterly unprepared for the sequel.

By the sudden intensity of his attitude I felt that he saw something. I crept up behind him. He was staring with an eager questioning gaze at what seemed to be a wreath of mist, blown swiftly in a line with the ship. It was a dim nebulous body devoid of shape, sometimes more, sometimes less apparent, as the light fell on it. The moon was dimmed in its brilliancy at the moment by a canopy of thinnest cloud, like the coating of an anemone.

"Coming, lass, coming," cried the skipper, in a voice of unfathomable tenderness and compassion, like one who soothes a beloved one by some favour long looked for, and as pleasant to bestow as to receive.

What followed, happened in an instant. I had no power to interfere. He gave one spring to the top of the bulwarks, and another which took him on to the ice, almost to the feet of the pale misty

figure. He held out his hands as if to clasp it, and so ran into the darkness with outstretched arms and loving words. I still stood rigid and motionless, straining my eyes after his retreating form, until his voice died away in the distance. I never thought to see him again, but at that moment the moon shone out brilliantly through a chink in the cloudy heaven, and illuminated the great field of ice. Then I saw his dark figure already a very long way off, running with prodigious speed across the frozen plain. That was the last glimpse which we caught of him—perhaps the last we ever shall. A party was organised to follow him, and I accompanied them, but the men's hearts were not in the work, and nothing was found. Another will be formed within a few hours. I can hardly believe I have not been dreaming, or suffering from some hideous nightmare as I write these things down.

7.30 P.M.—Just returned dead beat and utterly tired out from a second unsuccessful search for the Captain. The floe is of enormous extent, for though we have traversed at least twenty miles of its surface, there has been no sign of its coming to an end. The frost has been so severe of late that the overlying snow is frozen as hard as granite, otherwise we might have had the footsteps to guide us. The crew are anxious that we should cast off and steam round the floe and so to the southward, for the ice has opened up during the night, and the sea is visible upon the horizon. They argue that Captain Craigie is certainly dead, and that we are all risking our lives to no purpose by remaining when we have an opportunity of escape. Mr. Milne and I have had the greatest difficulty in persuading them to wait until to-morrow night, and have been compelled to promise that we will not under any circumstances delay our departure longer than that. We propose therefore to take a few hours' sleep and then to start upon a final search.

September 20th, evening.—I crossed the ice this morning with a party of men exploring the southern part of the floe, while Mr. Milne went off in a northerly direction. We pushed on for ten or twelve miles without seeing a trace of any living thing except a single bird, which fluttered a great way over our heads, and which by its flight I should judge to have been a falcon. The southern extremity of the ice field tapered away into a long narrow spit which projected out into the sea. When we came to the base of this promontory, the men halted, but I begged them to continue to the extreme end of it that we might have the satisfaction of knowing that no possible chance had been neglected.

We had hardly gone a hundred yards before McDonald of Peterhead cried out that he saw something in front of us, and began to run. We all got a glimpse of it and ran too. At first it was

only a vague darkness against the white ice, but as we raced along together it took the shape of a man, and eventually of the man of whom we were in search. He was lying face downwards upon a frozen bank. Many little crystals of ice and feathers of snow had drifted on to him as he lay, and sparkled upon his dark seaman's jacket. As we came up some wandering puff of wind caught these tiny flakes in its vortex, and they whirled up into the air, partially descended again, and then, caught once more in the current, sped rapidly away in the direction of the sea. To my eyes it seemed but a snow-drift, but many of my companions averred that it started up in the shape of a woman, stooped over the corpse and kissed it, and then hurried away across the floe. I have learned never to ridicule any man's opinion, however strange it may seem. Sure it is that Captain Nicholas Craigie had met with no painful end, for there was a bright smile upon his blue pinched features, and his hands were still outstretched as though grasping at the strange visitor which had summoned him away into the dim world that lies beyond the grave.

We buried him the same afternoon with the ship's ensign around him, and a thirty-two pound shot at his feet. I read the burial service, while the rough sailors wept like children, for there were many who owed much to his kind heart, and who showed now the affection which his strange ways had repelled during his lifetime. He went off the grating with a dull, sullen splash, and as I looked into the green water I saw him go down, down, down until he was but a little flickering patch of white hanging upon the outskirts of eternal darkness. Then even that faded away and he was gone. There he shall lie, with his secret and his sorrows and his mystery all still buried in his breast, until that great day when the sea shall give up its dead, and Nicholas Craigie come out from among the ice with the smile upon his face, and his stiffened arms outstretched in greeting. I pray that his lot may be a happier one in that life than it has been in this.

I shall not continue my journal. Our road to home lies plain and clear before us, and the great ice field will soon be but a remembrance of the past. It will be some time before I get over the shock produced by recent events. When I began this record of our voyage I little thought of how I should be compelled to finish it. I am writing these final words in the lonely cabin, still starting at times and fancying I hear the quick nervous step of the dead man upon the deck above me. I entered his cabin to-night as was my duty, to make a list of his effects in order that they might be entered in the official log. All was as it had been upon my previous visit, save that the picture which I have described as having hung at

the end of his bed had been cut out of its frame, as with a knife, and was gone. With this last link in a strange chain of evidence I close my diary of the voyage of the *Pole-star*.

[NOTE by Dr. John McAlister Ray, senior.—“ I have read over the strange events connected with the death of the Captain of the *Pole-star*, as narrated in the journal of my son. That everything occurred exactly as he describes it I have the fullest confidence, and, indeed, the most positive certainty, for I know him to be a strong-nerved and unimaginative man, with the strictest regard for veracity. Still, the story is, on the face of it, so vague and so improbable, that I was long opposed to its publication. Within the last few days, however, I have had independent testimony upon the subject which throws a new light upon it. I had run down to Edinburgh to attend a meeting of the British Medical Association, when I chanced to come across Dr. P——, an old college chum of mine, now practising at Saltash, in Devonshire. Upon my telling him of this experience of my son's, he declared to me that he was familiar with the man, and proceeded, to my no small surprise, to give me a description of him, which tallied remarkably well with that given in the journal, except that he depicted him as a younger man. According to his account, he had been engaged to a young lady of singular beauty residing upon the Cornish coast. During his absence at sea his betrothed had died under circumstances of peculiar horror.]

Edgar Poe and his Biographers.

THE city of New York no longer lacks a memorial to Edgar Poe. Hitherto the only external and visible tribute to the one original poetical genius that America has yet produced, has been the monument which was placed some few years ago over his grave in Baltimore. Poe was in one way and another specially connected with that city. There the first youthful labours of his Muse were published; there his literary talents were first recognised; there, indeed, he was until recently believed to have been born; and there he did, in fact, close his short and fevered career in circumstances of peculiar sadness. But to a memorial in Baltimore cannot, of course, belong the national distinction of a memorial in New York. We are unable indeed to follow an ingenious theory that was then set up, that such a commemoration was tantamount to a "kind of formal cancelling of Poe's moral attainder on the part of the United States;" but all—and they are fewer, we fear, than could be wished—who are content to appreciate the poet without too curiously dissecting the man, will learn with pleasure that the first city in the country which gave him birth, at length vouchsafes to one of its most gifted, if unfortunate, sons an honour that had been too long delayed. And our readers will, we think, be inclined to agree with us that the delay had been caused rather by a national inability to recognise his claims to that honour, than by any national abhorrence of his moral delinquencies. In truth, Poe's admirers in any country, though assuredly not wanting in enthusiasm, have ever been select rather than numerous. With the peculiar qualities of his fanciful and morbid genius, the somewhat practical mind of America never has been, and we fancy even now is not, in much sympathy; while that part of him which was unfortunately but too apparent to every eye was assuredly not of a nature to suggest to his countrymen the propriety of a national tribute. On the whole, we are, we think, not far wrong in attributing the somewhat tardy action of New York rather to a deference to European, perhaps to English opinion, than to a national though tardy recognition of native merit.

Unfortunate as Poe was in his lifetime, it may almost be questioned whether he has not been yet more unfortunate since his death. If there be haply any truth in his favourite theory of "the sentience of the dead," what misery and shame must have been his portion during the thirty years and more that he has lain in his grave at Baltimore!

Many men—it would be scarcely, perhaps, an extravagance to say most men—have been more or less unfortunate in their biographers, but no one, we think, has been so unfortunate as Poe. His own countryman, Rufus Griswold, a name that has recently been rescued from oblivion only to be assailed with a ferocity far in excess of any of his alleged assaults on Poe, was the first to profess to unfold the miserable story; the last has been Mr. John H. Ingram, a countryman of our own.* Between these two extremes lie a host of essays, memoirs, “monographs,” critical and biographical, English and American. Of these the most valuable, perhaps, as evincing, unlike most of its peers, a certain degree of sobriety of thought, together with some appearance of impartiality, is the work of Mr. Gill,† an American, who has practically anticipated Mr. Ingram on all essential points. Assuredly the most remarkable is the production of a lady,‡ who had been personally acquainted with Poe, and who, if we may be permitted to judge by her work, appears to have been, in the phraseology of Mr. Lafayette Kettle, “one of the most remarkable women in the country.” It is assuredly one of the most remarkable books ever published in any country; nor do we know where in literature to look for its parallel, unless haply it might be found in the effusions, of which unhappily a small part only has been preserved, of the two Literary Ladies who played so conspicuous a part at the levée held by the Honourable Elijah Pogram. Of the celebrated essay by Baudelaire, of which both Mr. Gill and Mr. Ingram speak in terms which are intelligible only on the supposition that they have never read it, we shall have somewhat to say presently. It is with Mr. Ingram’s latest work, however, that we are chiefly concerned, and which we shall take as the base of the few remarks we propose to offer on the subject of our article. Our choice has been determined less by the intrinsic value of the work, than by the position its author has claimed for it as a triumphant and lasting vindication of a maligned and suffering man, and by the extraordinary complacency, to employ no harsher term, with which Mr. Ingram’s reviewers have suffered his claim to pass unchallenged, or even acknowledged and guaranteed it. Most heartily do we wish that it were possible for us to say what we have it in our heart to say without reopening a miserable controversy, already protracted far beyond all necessary limits, and which, in truth, a little discretion and good sense should have rendered unnecessary from the first.

* ‘Edgar Allan Poe, his Life, Letters, and Opinions,’ by John H. Ingram. 2 vols. London. 1880.

† ‘The Life of Edgar Allan Poe,’ by William F. Gill. Third edition, revised and enlarged, London. 1878.

‡ ‘Edgar Poe and his Critics.’ New York. 1860.

Most gladly, could we find it consistent with our duty, would we refrain from lifting so much as a finger against the idol which Mr. Ingram has set up. Indeed, had the idolatry been confined to this single worshipper, we could be well content to leave him to the free enjoyment of his self-imposed rites. But unfortunately he has called, and somewhat peremptorily called, upon the world to come and worship with him at the altar of this strange god; and there is danger lest the world, generally but too willing to listen to whomsoever will cry loud enough, should be converted to this new belief. The profession of literature has its duties not less than the profession of charity; and it is in the interest of the former that we find ourselves compelled, though we shall do so as gently as truth and common sense will permit, to disregard the softer appeals of the latter. We must console ourselves with the dignified comment of Johnson on a somewhat similar subject: "If we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth."

It is an ill thing to stand between a man and his conscience, and if, as Mr. Ingram asserts in his preface, he has been really moved to the composition of these volumes by a sense of duty, we must content ourselves with wishing that he could have found his duty more compatible with ours. It would, indeed, be impossible for a biographer at all burdened by conscience to make the tale of Poe's life other than pitiful and unpleasing; yet most assuredly it should be neither tedious nor uninteresting. Mr. Ingram is unhappily both. These are, perhaps, to be regarded as misfortunes rather than faults, but he has imparted a third quality to his work, which is undeniably a fault and a very grave one—he is one of the most didactic, one of the most aggressive of biographers. On all his predecessors (save Baudelaire, whom we fancy he does not perfectly understand, and the "Literary Lady," to whose style he has, indeed, not seldom paid the sincerest compliment of imitation)—on all, we say, whether friendly to his idol, or hostile, he falls with equal violence. Not one brave man is allowed to have lived before this truculent Agamemnon. Only a very strong case, indeed, will support such a mode of attack, and there is no question that Mr. Ingram's case, a very delicate one from the first, has been very seriously damaged by it.

The life of Edgar Poe forms one of the saddest chapters in the history of literature. There are, indeed, too many chapters in that history which it is impossible to read without great sorrow and pity. The names of Marlowe, Otway, Butler, Hook, Boyse, Savage, Chatterton, will occur at once to every reader. And there are many others doubtless whom a research in the obscure annals of Grub Street would serve to recall from the oblivion which has been their only portion.

But the name of Poe stands, we think, pre-eminent on this unhappy roll. It may contain some more conspicuous by their genius, many more conspicuous by their misfortunes; but it contains no one, we submit, of equal genius and equal misfortunes who persistently threw away so many and such fair opportunities. To none, indeed, of these we have named can be ascribed that peculiar odour of sanctity which is supposed on poetical tradition to belong to

“A brave man struggling in the storms of fate.”

Much of the misery which was the lot of such spirits as Savage and Chatterton, was the result of their own misdoing; out of their own vices were made the whips with which Fortune scourged them through the world. Yet it may fairly be pleaded for them that they were born into an atmosphere of poverty and hardship, and that the long struggle of their life was fought with unequal arms, and with every disadvantage of ground. But with Poe the case was different. His parents were, it is true, but two poor, though well-born, actors, whom a merciful fate removed from the scene before their time. But the child himself was taken almost from his cradle into a home where every happiness that affection could suggest, and wealth supply, was his. His new parents were, indeed, less discriminate than kind, nor was his early treatment such as to qualify a naturally wayward temper to correct the defects of injudicious indulgence. But the wretchedness of his subsequent career, the struggles and disappointments of his manhood, the shame and sadness of his end, arose in the first instance solely from his own perverse and ill-regulated disposition. His patron was not less long-suffering than kind. He forgave his foster-child, not once, but many times; and whatever may have been the cause of the final rupture, it is but common justice to credit Allan with having exhausted the ordinary stock of human patience, before he closed his doors against the headstrong and ungrateful youth. When every allowance has been made for him that reason will allow charity to suggest, it is still impossible for common sense to regard Poe as the victim of an abnormal combination of circumstances too strong for human control. Tried he surely was by great temptations, against which neither his training nor his temperament had supplied him with the capacity of resistance; but for the strength of the combination and the weakness of the resistance, he, and he only, was responsible.

And really, despite his protestations made, we are willing to believe in all honesty, it is difficult to see what Mr. Ingram has done for this unhappy creature, save to drag once more into public notice the pitiful story of his wasted life. Griswold has, indeed, been convicted of a few inaccuracies and exaggerations which may or may not have

been the result of deliberate malice. But this had been already done, as we have said, by Mr. Gill in America, and by Mr. Ingram himself in this country in the memoir prefixed to his edition of Poe's works, published at Edinburgh in 1874. With regard to the charge of deliberate malice which Mr. Ingram asserts and reasserts against Griswold, it is difficult at this distance of time to decide the truth, based as the charge practically is on nothing more than assertion. It is certain, however, that more discretion and more charity would have better become one who was in some measure entrusted with the defence of the dead man's memory. But the inaccuracies cannot be disputed. Here again, however, it should be remembered that Griswold, writing under extreme pressure of time, was forced to rely for a great part of his materials on the information previously supplied to him by Poe himself, and how trustworthy a source that was may be gathered from the single fact that Poe was ignorant even of the date of his own birth. Nor do we think that Mr. Ingram need have pushed the charge of inaccuracy so very sternly home, when we find him commencing his own memoir of the poet, prefixed to the edition of 1874, with the statement that Poe was born in Baltimore on the 19th of February, 1809, when one of the few facts, of which we are really certain, in Poe's life is that he was born in Boston on the 19th of January, 1809. But on this head it were idle to waste more time. Our readers can collate for themselves the labours of the two biographers, and form their own judgment on the value of the latter's refutation.

As for the new "facts" which Mr. Ingram claims to have been the first to bring to light, they seem scarcely, in our estimation, of importance to justify two new volumes. Of what aid, for example, is it to our estimate of a man's character or genius to learn that, through the kindness of a friend, his wife was buried in a linen shroud instead of a cotton one; or are we to be dragooned into a belief that a man is a suffering, slandered innocent, because his voice was "melody itself," and his brow "fine and expressive"? Parts, indeed, of Mr. Ingram's book bear a strong family likeness to some of Poe's own papers on the "Literati" of America, in which criticism, or what in those days passed for criticism, is mingled with such valuable scraps of information as "in person he is tall, nearly six feet, with large bones," or "he has thick whiskers meeting under the chin, and much out of keeping with the shirt collar à la Byron." Nor is Mr. Ingram's sense of proportion much more conspicuous than his sense of the ludicrous. He devotes several pages to a ridiculous schoolboy freak at West Point, which will scarcely strike the impartial reader as conclusive evidence of sobriety of conduct or a strict attention to study; while Poe's fleetness of foot and prowess as a swimmer are to him apparently irrefragable proofs of the

inherent greatness and goodness of the man. Like the lover in Moore's poem, "Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame," Mr. Ingram remains constant still to his idol. He can see no discredit, for example, in the letters addressed to Mrs. Whitmore and "Annie." To the former Poe had engaged himself in marriage in the year following the death of that wife for whose loss he professed himself, and was believed to be, heartbroken; and scarcely had the lady wisely cancelled the engagement than he writes to "Annie," to express "how great a burden is taken off my heart by my rupture with Mrs. W——," and to avow his determination from that day forth to "shun the pestilent society of literary women. . . . a heartless, unnatural, venomous set, with no guiding principle but inordinate self-esteem." In these and similar "philanderings," proofs, we presume, of "Poe's invariable courtesy towards women," Mr. Ingram can see nothing but the evidences of a poetic temperament, and alludes to them eloquently as the bright incidents that aided the poet in his "lonesome latter years"!

It is curious how, in some points, Mr. Ingram has changed his opinions since his earlier memoir. Space will not permit us more than one instance, but one will, we think, be sufficient. Writing in 1874 he violently denounces, as proceeding from "the anonymous author of a scurrilous paper," a ridiculous story which placed Poe for a second time in England as the associate in friendship and labour with Leigh Hunt, Theodore Hook, and other men of that rank in letters; as though a stranger, and above all an American stranger, of such peculiar temperament and qualities, could have made, for how short a time soever, one of such a society, and left no mark behind. In the present biography Mr. Ingram contents himself with offering the story on the evidence of one "claiming a personal knowledge" with Poe, as a very plausible explanation of a mysterious blank in the latter's chronology. It is impossible, indeed, to fill this blank from June 1827 to March 1829 with any degree of certainty. It has been supposed by his admirers that, fired by Byron's noble death, he left America with the intention of devoting his life to the cause of Grecian independence. Whether he ever reached his destination they do not pretend to say, but Mr. Ingram gravely prints an astounding tissue of absurdities, dictated by Poe in the intervals of delirium, according to which the wanderer visited France, had various successful love affairs, one of which resulted in a duel and a severe wound; wrote a novel, which was attributed to Eugène Sue, and performed a variety of equally romantic exploits, not one of which is on the face of it half so credible as the story related by Griswold, that he was involved in some disagreeable consequences through a drunken frolic in St

Petersburg, from which he was rescued by the American Minister and sent home to his friends. It is but fair to say, however, that this story is no more true of Edgar Poe than the one Mr. Ingram has told. Yet it has at least this much more excuse for it, that William, Edgar's elder brother, a sailor, appears in the course of his voyages to have visited Russia, and might, very possibly, as sailors sometimes will, have got into a scrape in that country. Mr. Gill, whom Mr. Ingram contemptuously ignores, save only to allude to him once as a writer of "proven unreliability," proffers the direct testimony of Mr. Neilson Poe, a cousin, following the profession of attorney in Baltimore, that, to his certain knowledge, Edgar, after his return from his English school in 1825, never again left America at any period of his life. As Mr. Ingram offers no tittle of evidence to the contrary, save that of Poe's own distempered dreams, we can see no reason why Mr. Gill, who does offer direct evidence, which has never met, so far as we are aware, with any direct contradiction, is not to be believed.

Again, one of Mr. Ingram's favourite charges against Griswold and, indeed, against nearly every one who has ever presumed to write on the subject, is that of malicious suppression of facts to Poe's credit. Now, so far as the dignity and usefulness of biography are concerned, it matters not a whit whether the facts suppressed are to the credit or discredit of the subject, so long as they are essential to the truth. We should certainly be sorry to bring any such charge against Mr. Ingram, whose faults, whether of commission or omission, we honestly believe to be due solely to that curious but not uncommon disease, which Macaulay has happily styled the *lues Boswelliana*, rather than to any wilful distortion of fact. But we must say that he has on more than one occasion brought himself within the possibility of such a charge. We will content ourselves with one instance. Among the many quarrels which Poe had so unfortunate a knack of fixing on men able and willing to help him, was one with Burton, a retired actor, who had established a 'Gentleman's' magazine in Philadelphia, and in May 1839 engaged Poe for his editor. Even the latter's most partial witnesses, always, of course, excepting Mr. Ingram, admit that it was impossible to place much reliance on him in that capacity, however brilliant a contributor he might, and did, prove. Yet he held the post for upwards of a year, nor was it till after great and repeated provocation that Burton was compelled to sever the connection. Mr. Ingram publishes a letter from Poe to Burton, the insolent intemperance of which can only be excused, if, indeed, such an excuse may be admitted, by the supposition, for which the internal evidence is tolerably strong, that the writer had not wholly recovered from what one of his admirers has gently described as the "injudi-

cious acceptance of friendly hospitalities." Mr. Ingram praises Poe for the "habitual carefulness" with which his business accounts were invariably kept, but the specimen of carefulness proffered us in this letter, which consists of a mistake in simple addition for which a child of six years old would deserve punishment, hardly bears out the praise. Nevertheless this letter is published, mistake and all, to throw, in Mr. Ingram's words, some light upon the affair. But there also happens to be extant a very kindly letter from Burton, which "throws such light on the affair" as will enable all, save those who refuse to see, to understand the true state of the case; and this letter Mr. Ingram has entirely suppressed! It is not necessary to adopt Griswold's coarse relation of the immediate rupture, but it is very clear that Burton suffered long and in silence before he had recourse even to remonstrance.

In truth, it is sorry work going back over the story of such a life, but any course is permissible which may serve to prevent readers from wasting their tears over the suffering saint that Mr. Ingram has tried to draw, or from enshrining Poe in that imaginary gallery of men of genius "of whom the world was not worthy." A man of genius he certainly was, of a very delicate and original genius, which in happier circumstances and under a more regular and temperate system of education, might have expanded into a ripe and wholesome maturity. He is pre-eminently one of those writers whose works require careful and judicious sifting. Out of the four thick volumes of the edition of 1874 one small volume might be composed on which his fame would securely rest, and in that volume would be many pieces, both in prose and verse, of rare and particular merit. But the greater part of his work, written, as it necessarily too often was, to supply the wants of the passing hour, had far better have been left to perish. His knowledge of the classics was infinitely below that which numbers of clever boys carry up every term from our schools to our universities. Immense as Mr. Ingram pronounces his learning to have been, it could not prevent him from ascribing the *Œdipus Coloneus* to *Æschylus*, or from charging the whole Greek Drama with an insufferable baldness or platitude, "the inevitable result of inexperience in art, which pedantry would force us to believe the result of a studied and supremely artistic simplicity alone"—a sentence which we take to be, on the whole, the most astounding example of impudent ignorance whereof the annals of literature bear record. His philosophy, where original, was sheer nonsense, and tawdry, ranting nonsense to boot. He was wholly devoid of humour, and despite the elegant form of much of his best work, singularly deficient in taste. But worst of all has his fame been served by the republication of what Mr. Ingram is pleased to

call his "slashing critiques," which can only now excite a feeling of wonder as to what the condition of literary criticism must then have been in America when such pretentious, superficial, and, we must add, vulgar work could rank among the best.

To sum up, posterity has done, we think, full justice to Poe as a writer, and but very little less than justice, we fear, to him as a man. That he was tried by strong temptations all have been ever ready to admit; how far those temptations arose from the injudicious training of his early years, how far they were due to his own perverse and diseased temperament, it is, perhaps, impossible at this distance of time to decide. The full benefit of the doubt should therefore be given to him, as, though Mr. Ingram will probably refuse to believe us, it always has been given to him by impartial thinkers. But it is evident that even in those early years he was wayward, headstrong, proud, and irritable. Dependent from his birth on a rich and indulgent, but foolish patron, the faults of the boy easily and naturally developed into the vices of the man. He had his chance, as all men have, if they can recognise it, and that not once, nor seven times, but seventy times seven, and he threw them all away. There are many men now living who know of an infinity of kind actions done to Poe, and of many more that would cheerfully have been done, had not his own misconduct persistently neutralised all attempts to benefit him. It was, in truth, impossible to befriend him. He was both false and ungrateful, arrogant when sober, insolent when drunk. This is the truth which the world has recognised of Poe, and would have recognised had Griswold never written a line of biography, and will continue to recognise, despite the misguided enthusiasm of romantic sentimentalists. Yet the world, had it been suffered, would have been well content to admire the genius, and to forget the man; it is Mr. Ingram and his school who insist that the world shall not forget. The facts remain, and with what charity is willing to forego, sobriety and honesty alike refuse to sympathise. Let the miserable chapter of Poe's life by all means be closed for ever, but let us not, in the name of common sense and common decency, be asked to mourn the "hapless poet," the "victim of calumny," the "winning and refined gentleman." Such false sentiment, such vicious appeals to our sympathy are to be deprecated greatly, not only for the mischief they are themselves capable of causing in young and untutored minds, but also for the unpleasantness of the antidote it is necessary to apply. A Baudelaire may be permitted to rave about the "phosphorence of putrefaction," and the "odour of the hurricane," which he found so splendid in Poe and his works, and to talk with sympathetic admiration of the poor wretch's fits of drinking as a "method of work appropriate to his passionate nature." Such nauseous folly falls fitly

from the pen of the author of 'Les Fleurs du Mal.' But it is to be hoped that the day is far distant when Englishmen will be unable to appreciate the true lesson of such lives as that of the miserable idol of Mr. Ingram's worship, or suffer their pity to degenerate into sentiment, and their sentiment, as experience proves it inevitably will, into admiration.

Doctor Veroni's Secret.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

My father was an analytical chemist, and one of my earliest recollections is of a hurried visit secretly paid to his laboratory, where I gazed, half in terror, half in delight, at the fuming and hissing retort, and at the electrical machine with its big glass wheel.

My father was in great repute as an analyst and adviser on the value of new inventions, and earned many substantial fees by his advice on those matters. I, his only son, was sent to a good school, but at my own earnest request, instead of sending me to Oxford, my father took me into his laboratory, and taught me chemistry, electricity, and one or two other sciences. When he had possessed me of all he knew himself, he wished to send me to Germany for six months, to see whether the blue-spectacled professors there knew any more than we did in England.

Naturally enough, perhaps, for a man of his ability, my father was not content to go on adding five guineas to five guineas by slow degrees. He therefore set to work and made a new dye—a beautiful dark brown—and patented it. He then connected himself with a man who professed to “know the trade,” and had no doubt he could “push the thing” easily. After a little, my father’s money began to melt away, and his friend wanted to start a company—“The business needed capital.” Well—to cut a long story short—the company was started, with my father’s coadjutor as manager; but it never paid, and in two years “The Nut Brown Dye Company” was wound up. The assets consisted of some expensive engines and machinery, and a large number of outstanding bad debts. The manager went to America, and my father was ruined. He never held up his head again, and died, I fear, of a broken heart.

I tried to carry on his business, but I found that those who had gladly trusted the tried skill and wide experience of the father, would have nothing to say to the son. I saw my small stock of money rapidly melting away, so I sold the laboratory, and de-

terminated to get "qualified" as a doctor. I entered myself as a medical student at St. Simon's Hospital. What with fees and books and my board and lodging, I found the eighty pounds received from the sale of my father's laboratory did not last very long. Things got worse and worse, till I seriously thought of hiring myself out as assistant at a druggist's shop, and giving up all idea of attending lectures.

One morning in October I was performing my duty as "dresser," in one of the surgical wards of the hospital, when Dr. Armitage, one of the physicians, entered, accompanied by a stranger. The two went to a bed where a poor fellow was lying who had been crushed well-nigh to death by some machinery the day before. The doctors examined his numerous fractures, and seemed to be holding an informal consultation. Apparently the stranger was urging some view of the case, or advising that some operation should be tried. He got quite excited, and accompanied his rapid Italian speech with many gestures, spreading out his palms, waving his hands in the air, touching daintily every now and then the patient before him. The London doctor was listening thoughtfully, stroking his chin, and putting in a word now and then.

At last they left the bedside and came slowly down the ward. As they came near me, Dr. Armitage caught my eye, and stopped.

"Pardon me, Dr. Beroni," he said, "but you were saying downstairs that you wanted an assistant well up in chemistry, and so on."

"Yes."

"Well, I think I've got the very man to suit you."

"Ah! so?"

"This is Mr. John Glendinning, doctor, one of our students, that is, in medicine; for I don't think we could teach him much in chemistry."

Dr. Beroni, who merely bowed to me, said a word or two in Italian to Dr. Armitage, who replied aloud:

"Oh, there's no possible doubt about his carefulness. He was brought up in his father's laboratory."

"Ah! Good!"

By this time I had taken a good look at the Italian doctor. He was decidedly past middle life, but not yet old. He was thin, with stooping shoulders, shrunken limbs, and delicate, nervous hands. His hair was thin and iron-grey. He seemed, in fact, an old man for his years. The mouth was reserved and firm, perhaps severe, and the eyes were black and piercing. His complexion was dark of course; if there are any Italian physicians in red and

white, I have never seen one. Dr. Beroni was a gentleman; there could be no doubt of that, but what sort of a man he was I could not make up my mind. I harbour a fancy that if I give my instinct full play, as a dog, or a child does by nature, I can tell roughly the character of a man at the first glance; but here my faculty,—instinct, or whatever you may call it,—was at fault, and I could not feel sure whether Dr. Beroni was a man to be trusted or not.

"If you would like to speak to Mr. Glendinning, Dr. Beroni," said Dr. Armitage, "will you kindly excuse me? I have an operation to perform, and I must go at once. Perhaps, Mr. Glendinning, you will be kind enough to see Dr. Beroni downstairs."

I led the way to the lower floors, and meantime the doctor proceeded to tell me his requirements. He was engaged, he said, in a series of rather tiresome and uninteresting experiments, and wanted an assistant upon whose patience and accuracy he could depend, for a few hours three days a week. Indeed, it was a careful and patient recorder of facts that he wanted—"hardly a gentleman of my considerable acquirements."

I said I thought I could be careful and accurate, and asked whether it would be necessary for me to give up attending lectures, and walking the hospital.

"I think not," he replied. "You can dine rather early, and be at my house at six. Then if four hours' work is not too much for you, all I want could be done before ten. Do you believe in phrenology, Mr. Glendinning?"

"No," I replied, with a wondering smile.

"Ah! I do,—a little,—that is, I place *some* reliance upon it. Have you any objection to let me put my fingers through your hair?"

"Oh, no; I don't mind. But, may I ask you, Dr. Beroni, what salary you thought of giving your assistant?" I was anxious to be the first to ask this question, because I had no idea what I ought to ask, and I was afraid of asking either a ridiculously low sum, or one that would prevent the doctor from accepting my services altogether.

"Well, I have hardly thought of that; let me see,—four hours a day three days a week: would twenty guineas a month be satisfactory?"

I said it would be quite satisfactory, and turning into one of the waiting-rooms I sat down to submit my head to the Italian's examination. If he had a craze for phrenology, I thought, it was quite natural that he should wish to satisfy himself that I had

the bumps which indicate accuracy and carefulness in a proper state of development. I was only anxious not to lose the work. Twenty guineas a month! It was quite fair pay for the number of hours Dr. Beroni wished to keep me at work, and the kind of work I would have to do. I could save money out of less than that.

As the doctor ran his fingers through my hair, he said in a low voice, as if speaking to himself, "Yes, safe enough, and yet it is odd."—"You are not very orderly in small matters," he continued aloud; "you generally mislay your letters, keys, and so forth, while all the time you cannot bear disorder."

I actually started. That was one of my earliest characteristics. "You have a sympathetic nature," he said again,— "strong passions; will not so strong as it ought to be. Excuse me for one moment, Mr. Glendinning," and the doctor made some trifling excuse and left me alone.

I was sitting with my back to the door, occupied in pleasant dreams as to the magnificent fortune of twenty guineas a month. In about a minute I felt a little restless,—as one feels sometimes when one is wearing a tight collar, or is uncomfortable without knowing quite what ails one. I wanted to turn round and look out to see if the doctor was coming back. Suddenly I felt as if some one were standing close behind me, and I wheeled rapidly round in my chair, and saw, not Doctor Beroni, indeed, but his shadow on the opposite wall of the narrow passage, as he swiftly moved to one side, outside the door. The upper part of the door of the waiting-room was of common glass, so I could not possibly be mistaken.

I did not quite like this. It seemed like an unworthy trick. But I was anxious to secure the employment, so I did not care to quarrel with him. In another minute Dr. Beroni re-appeared, and I was then and there engaged as his laboratory assistant, and promised to begin work on the following day. He gave me his card—Dunnett House, Field Lane, Great Eastern Road, E. It was a long way off, and my new employer told me which railway I must take, and how I could find his house.

"By the way, I forgot travelling expenses. A guinea a month will be allowed for that. Oh, you need not hesitate to take it. It is a matter of course. Sir, I wish you good-morning"—and with a stately bow Dr. Beroni was gone.

In another hour I met Dr. Armitage, and told him I had got the post at Dr. Beroni's.

"Have you?" he returned. "Well, I am very glad, and you ought to learn something there, for he is said to know more about chemistry and metallurgy than any other man in Europe."

CHAPTER II.

I SET out for Dunnett House on a cold autumn afternoon. The air was thick with mist. The very gas lamps in the railway-station looked dim and woe-begone; the carriages seemed mustier and dirtier than usual. I was carried over miles of houses, warehouses, factories, lanes, and alleys, till we came to more open ground, and ran past bare unlovely banks of earth, strewn with stones, ashes, old tins, and shreds of paper; past wide desolate fields, leafless and broken hedgerows, small stagnant pools. Here and there was a row of squalid cottages, and now and then appeared a few half-finished houses, begun by some bankrupt builder.

At last we stopped at a small wooden platform, with a tumble-down wooden shed for a station-house. Sandown Road was the name of the station. I got out and, following Dr. Beroni's instructions, after about a mile's walk I arrived at Dunnett House. It was rather large, and had once, no doubt, been a handsome "family mansion." No other house was within six or seven hundred yards of its gates. A high wall ran between the garden and shrubbery and the lane. As I passed I noticed a door in the wall, which I supposed led to the kitchen and offices behind the house. A little farther on was a high wooden gate, in which was a smaller wicket-gate. I pushed it open and entered. The house door was reached by a wide flight of steps, and a handsome bay window flanked it on either side. A blank wall connected the house with the wall which ran between it and the lane. In front was a large neglected garden. I could just see through the misty twilight some overgrown bushes, straggling cabbages, and grass-grown walks.

I went up to the door, and after some trouble discovered a large rusty bell-pull, which moved with difficulty; after a second application, the door was opened by a small-sized damsel, and the doctor himself appeared, and shaking hands with me, led me into a large room on the right of the entrance-hall, half again as long as it was broad; at the farther end was an inner room separated from the library by large folding doors. Hanging lamps shed a soft and slightly tinted light. Round the walls were rows of shelves, filled with books, chiefly bound in ancient leather. There was a large fireplace with a lofty mantelpiece of black oak, but there was no fire, and the room had a comfortless, deserted appearance.

Dr. Beroni led the way into the room beyond, evidently an

annexe, built on the ground between the lane and the main body of the house. On the left was a door which opened into the laboratory, a small room with a furnace, retorts, electrical machines, and cases of chemicals. On the side nearest the lane was a door, which I afterwards found opened upon a sort of store-room where the bulkier materials were kept, and this room communicated by a narrow passage with the door in the wall which I had noticed on my first approach to the house.

Some chemicals were being fused in a crucible as we entered, and the doctor now added something from a bottle, and noted the temperature, the quantity used, and the result. He then handed me several large sheets of paper on which the results of many similar experiments were noted, and taking me back to the library, showed me a large volume of blank paper, and informed me that part of my duty would be to tabulate these notes in the volume, and afterwards to make more experiments and keep a careful record of them. I set about my task at once, while my employer returned to the laboratory.

I had been busy for about half-an-hour when a girl entered. In the dim lamp-light I could see little more than a tall figure, a white face, and a crown of jet-black hair. I rose and bowed, and the young lady returned my salute rather distantly. She searched for a few seconds on one of the shelves, and having found the book she wanted, silently left the room.

After another hour had passed, the Italian beckoned me into the laboratory, that I might assist him with the process, which apparently had reached its critical point. Anxiously he hung over the crucible, treating it in various ways,—cooling it, he would pass a current of electricity through the mass, and watch for some expected result,—or he would charge it with electricity and expose it again to the heat of the furnace. Every now and then he called to me, to make a note of some kind—of temperature, colour, or time. At last his patience was exhausted. The investigation, apparently, was unsuccessful. He set aside the crucible with an angry exclamation in Italian, and returning to the library, paced up and down, his hands behind his back, his head on his breast, in an attitude of deep dejection. Now and then he would pause, and taking a manuscript volume from one of the shelves, consult its pages, then refer to the loose notes he had made, and then resume his pacing up and down the room.

Finally he stopped, stamped his foot, and said aloud,—“It *must* succeed: it *shall* succeed! Come Mr. Glendinning,” he continued, “we have had enough of it for to-night. Will you join us at supper this evening?”

Dr. Beroni led the way out of the library, crossed the hall, and opened the door of a room on the other side. It was brightly lighted, and a table was already laid for supper. From a low seat beside the fire, a girl rose slowly to her feet.

"Ina, my dear," said the doctor, "let me introduce to you Mr. Glendinning, the son, I am told, of an eminent *savant*, who has agreed to aid me in my work."

The young lady smiled, and I perceived how lovely she was. In repose her face seemed cold, though with perfect features; but when she smiled I thought her by far the most lovely girl I had ever beheld. Her dress was of a creamy white, soft and warm in texture, and admirably suited to her dark hair and eyes. Her hands were as beautiful as her face,—thin and delicate. I noticed that she wore no bracelets or rings; a thin gold chain of antique pattern round her neck, without any pendant, was her only ornament.

No servant appeared; we sat down to the little table, and helped each other. During supper I was astonished at the brilliancy of the doctor's conversation. He had travelled much. He did not touch upon science, but spoke of modern art, of English and Italian politics, of music, of the topics of the day. One of us happened to speak of "thought-reading." Some articles had appeared on the subject in one or two of the leading reviews, and the thing was becoming rather a fashionable drawing-room amusement.

"You don't believe there is anything in it, of course, Dr. Beroni?" I asked carelessly.

"I don't know that," he answered seriously. "Have you read the articles and correspondence in the 'New World'?"

I confessed that I had not.

"Well, I believe it has been established that under certain conditions certain people may communicate to each other simple ideas without any known material signs."

"Or looks?" I suggested.

"Or looks," returned the doctor. "I meant by the expression 'material signs' all ordinary methods of communicating intelligence."

I shook my head.

"Come now," said the Italian, with a smile, "have you never thought a good deal about an absent friend, and found a letter from him on your table next morning?"

"Certainly."

"And what was that? Have you never said to a friend as he opened your door, 'I was just thinking about you'?"

"Of course."

"And what was that?"

"Merely a coincidence, I should say."

"But the phenomenon is too regular with some people to be accounted for in that way. My daughter, for example, can tell the hour of the day that I have been thinking of her, if we agree before I leave in the morning that at some part of the day I will fix my thoughts on her for two or three minutes."

"Is it possible!"

"The result is not always satisfactory. Much depends upon the two persons being under similar physical and mental conditions,—something, I am inclined to imagine, on the weather or rather the electrical condition of the atmosphere. But the number of successful experiments is singular. More than that, we can generally succeed in guessing what subject the other is thinking of, if we choose."

He turned to his daughter as he spoke, and took a pack of cards from a side table.

"Ina, do you mind letting Mr. Glendinning see whether you can guess the card I am thinking of?"*

Ina smiled, and closed her eyes. The doctor showed me a card,—the Queen of Clubs,—and then said aloud:

"Now, Ina."

The girl looked steadily into his eyes for a few seconds, and then said suddenly:

"The Queen of Spades, or Clubs,—I can't be sure which."

"That is not quite successful," said Dr. Beroni, as he showed her the card; "try again."

Again she closed her eyes, and her father asked me to choose a card. I did so. It was the ace of diamonds. Again Miss Beroni fastened her eyes on her father's face, and now she answered more readily than before,—"The ace of diamonds!"

"You may imagine," said the Italian, "that we are playing a little trick upon you, that my daughter and I have some secret code of signals, or that unconsciously I give some indication in my countenance of the card I am thinking of; but it is not so. The experiment sometimes succeeds when we are quite separated from each other. Let us try. You leave the room, Ina, and Mr. Glendinning and I will think of some name."

The girl went out into the hall, and I suggested the name of "Mr. Gladstone."

* For a description of a series of such experiments, which were actually made, see an article on "Thought Reading," in the 'Nineteenth Century' for June 1882.

"Bend your will with all your power," said the doctor, "on the intention that she shall know it, and I will do the same."

A short interval of silence followed, and then Ina gently opened the door and uttered Mr. Gladstone's name.

By this time I was greatly interested, and indeed somewhat excited.

"May I try?" I asked. "I am curious to know whether I have any share in this wonderful faculty."

"Certainly," returned the doctor.

He and his daughter stood side by side, and I stood facing them.

"Shut your eyes, Mr. Glendinning," said Ina, in her low, musical voice, "after you have looked at us steadily, and perhaps a sort of picture of the card we are thinking of will appear to you. It does to me."

They glanced at a card, and then I looked full into the doctor's piercing eyes. They seemed to exercise a strange spell over me, and it was almost with a sense of relief that I turned to look at his daughter. Her beautiful dark eyes met mine frankly and fearlessly. A kind of thrill passed through my frame, and I put my hands before my face. Slowly the image of a card formed itself before my sight just as if I had been looking at it for some minutes under a strong light, and had then shut my eyes.

"The five of hearts," I said, almost involuntarily.

"Right!" cried the doctor with enthusiasm. "You have the gift. It is well known that the same thing can be carried on much more easily by the help of the mesmeric sleep."

He turned to Ina, who was reclining in a low chair by the fire, and fixing his eyes on hers, made a few passes before her face, and presently she fell into a light sleep. The doctor next jotted down on a slip of paper before me the subjects of which he chose to think, and Ina, without being questioned, spoke of the same subjects. Next he handed his pencil to me, and I jotted down some subjects at random—the sea—the moon—the French Revolution—the House of Commons—and again the sleeping girl followed our thoughts.

"I had heard of this before," I said, when Miss Beroni awoke, "but how do you explain it?"

"The philosophical explanation is not so difficult," replied the Italian; "but it would take a long time to discuss that."

"Would you like to be mesmerised?" asked the doctor, when he had expounded his theory. But I shrank from subjecting my thoughts, perhaps my will, to a man of whom, after all, I knew nothing, and excused myself on the ground that it was late, and I must return to town.

"It is very curious," said I, as I rose to take my leave.

"Curious!" echoed the doctor. "It is more than curious. It is nothing less than the discovery of a new sense, or rather of a natural power more important, perhaps, than some at least of the senses. The question has never been properly investigated, and it will take time and labour to perfect our knowledge; but there is no reason why we should not discover conditions under which friends, thousands of miles apart, may converse with each other as freely as though they were face to face."

I took my leave, thinking that I would only too gladly take part in any experiments, however unpractical and absurd, that gave me a chance of being thrown into the society of Ina Beroni.

CHAPTER III.

A WEEK or two passed away, and I encountered nothing of special interest at Dunnett House. I had not been again invited to Dr. Beroni's dining-room, nor had I again seen his beautiful daughter. A tray of light refreshments was brought into the library while the doctor and I carried on our experiments. What these experiments really were, or what object they had in view, I could not conjecture. They seemed altogether irrational and absurd. Sometimes I fancied that the Italian must be engaged in searching for the elixir of life, or the philosopher's stone, that would change other metals into gold. However, it was no business of mine how the Italian chose to spend his time, and I continued to work away with minerals, gases, batteries, and sheets of tabulated results, as patiently as I could.

Before my father's death I had become a member of a West-End club, and I still kept my name on the books. It was a relief, sometimes, to encounter other society than that met with at St. Simon's Hospital.

One day as I was sitting in the club smoking-room, which was nearly empty, Lord Danzil sauntered up and sat down near me. He was a tall, well-built man, apparently about forty years of age, with a large face, the lower part of which was of great breadth. His mouth was hard and cruel, and his eyes had a smile that no woman could trust. Perhaps I was prejudiced, for I never liked the man.

"I hear you are helping Dr. Beroni in some of his experiments," he said after a few commonplace remarks.

"Yes," I answered with some surprise. "Do you know him?"

"Oh, yes; I have known him for years. I met him at Vienna, and we were a good deal together; I must go and see him. I did not know till the other day that he was in England. He is a curious man,—never stays above a year or two in the same place."

I made no answer, and Lord Danzil went on:

"He had a daughter, I remember, when I saw him last, who promised to be a great beauty. Have you seen her?"

"Yes; once."

A pause.

"Has the doctor been treating you to any of his queer notions—thought-reading, and so on?"

"We had some conversation on the subject."

"And a little mesmerism, I daresay?"

I did not answer.

"Or astrology?"

"No."

"Have you had the dark *séance*, and the wonderful crystal affair?"

"No; I know nothing about it."

"Ah! that will come in due time, I suppose. But what do you think of the fair Ina?"

"Really, Lord Danzil, I can't say. I have only seen the lady once in my life."

Lord Danzil smiled, and seemed to be turning over something in his mind.

"And the old fellow is still at his mysterious chemical experiments, is he?"

"Oh, yes."

He then put a few questions to me about the nature of these experiments, and as I could tell him almost nothing, I was not perhaps so careful in answering as I ought to have been.

"Well, the old doctor's fancies are nothing to us, my dear fellow," said my companion,—it occurred to me that I had never been Lord Danzil's "dear fellow" before—"but I will give you one little bit of advice; don't let Dr. Beroni gain too much influence over you. I don't understand these Italians, or their ways. Why does a learned man like this doctor go wandering all over Europe instead of settling down to practise, like anybody else? Why does he have one assistant, and then another. None remain with him long. Why does he use his daughter to draw you into his spiritualistic nonsense?"

I made an exclamation of indignant dissent.

"What possible object could the doctor have in trying to draw me, as you call it, into his strange theories and practices?"

"He may find you a fit subject for his experiments, and wish to use you in that way. I have heard of such things before. But I will only ask you one question, and, if you can answer it, you may forget all I have said. Is it usual for a scientific man to keep his assistant—an assistant whom he trusts, and introduces to his family—entirely in the dark concerning the nature and object of the experiments on which he is engaged?"

"Perhaps not," I replied after a pause; "but Dr. Beroni may have very good reasons for not wishing to share his secrets with any one."

"And the less you have to do with his secrets the better," returned my acquaintance, as he rose and left me.

It was good-natured of Danzil to put me on my guard, if he really did know anything against the doctor or his ways. And yet Lord Danzil was not quite the man from whom I should have expected disinterested kindness. His name had an unpleasant odour attaching to it. He had no estates to speak of, and never lived at his place, Oakleigh Park, but spent his time in wandering over Europe, not always in the best of company. He seldom went into society, and society was a little shy of him. I shared the general prejudice against the man; but perhaps, I thought, I ought to try to overcome it. It appeared, at least, that he had spoken in a friendly way to me, though I liked his manner as little as ever.

CHAPTER IV.

A FEW days after my conversation with Lord Danzil, Dr. Beroni met me in his library with a perplexed air.

"I am sorry, Mr. Glendinning, to have troubled you to come out here to-night. I am going to try an experiment of a new, and yet a very old kind; in fact if I had lived three centuries ago, I believe I would have run some risk of the stake, even in enlightened England! If I had thought of it in time I would have telegraphed to prevent your coming, for I don't know that it will have any interest for you."

I said that my journey was of no consequence.

"Since you are here, then, Mr. Glendinning," the doctor added, "perhaps you would like to look on."

But I remembered Lord Danzil's warning. And so I said, somewhat coldly, that I was much obliged, but if he would excuse me I would not stay that evening.

The Italian bade me good-night without any expression of

disappointment, and I left the room. While I was getting my hat, Miss Beroni crossed the hall. She came forward and held out her hand.

"You are not going away, Mr. Glendinning?" said she, with some surprise, as I moved towards the door.

"Yes; your father has no need of my services to-night."

"But he has—that is, there must be some mistake."

"And I cannot stay now, for your father invited me to remain, and I refused."

It was probably nothing but my own vanity that made me fancy that a shade of disappointment crossed her lovely face.

"I am sorry you must go," she said.

"If you have the least desire for me to stay"—I replied, awkwardly enough, "I shall be delighted to do so. But what can I say to Dr. Beroni?"

"Never mind," she answered, opening the door of the dining-room,—"sit down here; I will tell papa that you have changed your mind, and come for you when we are ready."

When Ina once more appeared, she had changed her dress, the white one she wore when I first saw her. She beckoned me to follow her, and led the way to the door of the library. As soon as the door was opened I perceived a strong scent, like that of the incense used in Catholic churches, and I stood entranced at the beauty of the scene that met my gaze.

The library itself was in darkness, and the room beyond shone with a trembling delicate light. The folding-doors were thrown back, making the farther room look like the lighted chancel of a church, of which the library, lying in complete darkness, formed the nave. The light came from behind a semicircular wall of painted glass, and light also came from a few coloured windows in the ceiling, which was of a deep blue flecked with golden stars. Round the walls of the recess were statues of white marble, and a few tripods holding braziers, from which rose clouds of incense, white, blue, and rose-coloured. Presently the lights behind the painted wall, and in the ceiling, moved, throwing a hundred tints on the white statues, on the incense-clouds, and on the rich carpets.

I followed Ina half-way up the library, and saw her father reclining on a couch. I went up to him, meaning to apologise for my presence, but he motioned me to a low seat, and Ina placed herself beside her father.

I now noticed that one of the tripods held some object about a foot in height, covered with a white silk cloth.

The soft tones of a distant organ were now heard, rising and

falling on the scented air. The music was weird, and sad, and strange. A sudden burst of triumphant harmony was followed by a low, pleading, mournful strain that seemed to come from a long distance. The lights were now reduced in brilliancy, and as they swung softly behind the painted windows, they barely lit up the clouds of incense. Still the music continued its sweet sadness, and involuntarily strange feelings of pity and compassion, of yearning for some unimagined joy, filled my heart and brain. I glanced at Ina, and though the lamps were dim, I believed I could discern from her face that the same emotions which influenced me were at work in her soul.

Silently the Italian rose, and led us forward to the ante-room.

"Wish to see my face," he whispered to me, "when we look at this together."

We knelt round the tripod covered by the white silk cloth. The veil was removed by the doctor, and we saw a large and brilliant crystal, set in a frame of gold and precious stones. We joined our hands, and, kneeling round the crystal, gazed into its well-like depths. The changing coloured light threw a thousand beautiful tints upon its spotless surface. The clouds of incense rose and fell, they made me feel faint with their heavy odour. The sad, complaining music, full of pained, yearning entreaty, filled all the air.

Suddenly the surface of the crystal was slightly dimmed. I glanced at the Italian kneeling opposite me, and saw in his face an expression which I had never before seen, and hope never to see again—one of conscious guilt, of horror, and of deadly fear.

My eyes fell again upon the crystal. There I saw, in the shining stone, the face, and the expression, which I had the instant before seen in the living flesh.

The figure was standing upright leaning forward, and I had hardly time to see the face, before the image turned its head away from me, and threw up one arm as if in self-defence; and then I saw another face appear behind the Italian's. I saw a look of cold malignant hatred in the stranger's dark and piercing eyes. I saw the uplifted arm, the gleaming steel. I shrieked aloud, and sank senseless upon the floor.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN I came to myself I was lying on a couch in the dining-room, Ina standing beside me with a troubled expression on her face, her father bending over me.

"The incense must have been too strong," I heard him say to

his daughter in his native tongue; "I should have remembered that he was not accustomed to it."

Ina saw that I was recovering, and held a glass of wine to my lips. I emptied the glass—it contained one of the cordials from the monasteries of the Alps—and sat up, almost myself again. I did not feel inclined to talk, and sat quietly beside the fire, while Ina went to a piano and played a few airs, not weird, melancholy music like that which we heard in the library, but pleasant light movements with sometimes a snatch of the Italian peasant dance-tunes.

"Tell me, doctor," said I, after supper, "why you gave yourself the trouble to produce so much stage effect? What virtue was there in all those moving coloured lights, dark shadows, white gleaming statues, clouds of incense, painted ceiling, and melancholy music?"

"Their use was this: in the first place to bring into prominence the emotional part of our natures, and in the second place to bring us, as far as possible, all under the same mental and physical conditions. These things act on the senses, the nerves, the brain. In all the old religions we have the same means resorted to. Even the savage, who has no temple, worships in the depths of some solitary grove, where the long-drawn shadows of solemn silences have more power than anything art can furnish. From the Temple of Solomon, with its golden candelabra, its incense, and antiphonal singing, and crowds of kneeling worshippers, we have the same appliances, music, lights and incense. The incense I used to-night was of a peculiar and potent kind. Incense has been used at the altar for thousands of years. Of course it has a theological meaning, but its practical purpose is to bridge over the gulfs of space and time, to turn the heart of a man into the heart of a child. When the Italian sailor, plunged into a life of recklessness and sin, wanders into a church at the other end of the world, in China, perhaps, or in South America, he sees the same undying flame before the altar, which attracted his childish gaze; the self-same chants sound in his ears; the incense rises, he inhales the well-remembered odour, and again he is in the little mountain-chapel in Italy, far away, kneeling by his mother's side. The habits of his wild and sinful life for the moment lose their power; he is set free; if ever his soul is open to receive the angel's touch, it will be at that moment."

There was a short pause, and then I said, hesitatingly, "And the crystal, Dr. Beroni?"

"I will be as frank as I can with you, my friend," said the Italian. I cannot tell you how I came by that crystal, nor what

its properties are. Many of them I do not know myself. You have seen some of its virtues. But I have long believed that two wills, my daughter's and mine, were not enough to project, as it were, the image in our brains into the clear mirror of the crystal. There needed to be at least a third person acting in complete unison with us. I thought, too, and I was right, that only a stranger, not my daughter, nor myself, would be able to use the power which the crystal might help him to, of bridging over the present and the future. Not everyone will fulfil the necessary conditions. Once I thought I had secured one who would faithfully serve my purpose, an Englishman like yourself, but no matter. As soon as I saw you I thought you might possibly prove the sympathetic person whom I needed. I tested you while you were in the waiting-room at the hospital by simply wishing that you should turn round in your chair. The wish was hardly formed in my brain before you obeyed it. Again I tested you in the simple experiments of thought-reading. You answered my expectations admirably. That is a branch of science, by the way, that we must pursue further."

Here the doctor spoke a few words in a low tone to his daughter, who immediately left the room.

"And now, tell me, what was it you saw in the stone?"

"Dr. Beroni," I said with a slight shudder at the recollection, "you saw it as well as I."

"Nay," answered he, "you saw more than I did, I think. I entreat you to tell me."

"I could only see what it was in your minds—yours and the signorina's—that I should see."

"No," answered the doctor, with some agitation; "up to a certain point it may be so, indeed it is so, but beyond that—who can tell? Speak plainly; the knowledge may be of the greatest use to me."

"I saw, then, your face. It wore an expression of fear and horror. But your face, your own face, had that very expression. What did *you* see?"

"I saw another face beside my own," said the doctor almost in a whisper, "one which you have never seen. But go on."

"You turned your head round suddenly, and threw up your right arm, as if to ward off a blow. Then some one came behind you, and struck at you with a knife, or a dagger."

"Did you see his face?" asked the doctor eagerly. "Would you recognise him?"

"I saw it dimly; I might recognise it; I could not be sure."

"Did the blow fall?" asked the Italian in a whisper.

"That I could not tell," I answered. "I fainted immediately."

The doctor sighed, and gazed into the dying embers in the grate.

"Not a word of this to Ina; mind, not a word," he said earnestly.

I gave the required promise.

"I wonder whether it would be possible to see the end of the vision," said the Italian musingly.

"Never," I exclaimed energetically; "I will never again submit myself to such unholy influences—never again!"

The doctor looked at me curiously; then he said, as if to himself:

"I suppose not; and besides, the conjunction could hardly happen again."

"The conjunction? What conjunction? What do you mean?" I asked.

"The conjunction of the constellations," replied Dr. Beroni calmly.

"You believe in astrology, then?"

"How long is it, do you think, since all men of science, all, or nearly all, believed in astrology?" retorted the doctor, as his daughter re-entered the room.

"Perhaps three hundred years," I replied.

"Less than that," he returned,— "less than two hundred years. And how long has it been believed in? How many thousand years? On what rocks of accumulated experience has each of these mysterious rules and laws been based? And because it is not a 'subject' in competitive examinations, you think it is not a branch of human knowledge! But this is only a part of the shallow scepticism of the day; if you cannot understand anything, deny that it exists."

As I rose to go, Dr. Beroni asked me:

"By the way, do you know a Mr. Bellairs? Have you seen him lately?"

"I don't know any such person."

"Think again," said the doctor, evidently surprised—"the Honourable Charles Bellairs."

Suddenly it occurred to me that Bellairs was Lord Danzil's family name.

"I believe I do know him," I said. "I think you must mean Lord Danzil. I only made his acquaintance since he succeeded to the title."

"Yes, I remember now," said the doctor; "he said he was heir to a peerage. Do you know him intimately?"

"Hardly that; we belong to the same club, but I've never been much in his set.

"Take care of him; take my advice, and don't be too frank with him. He is an unscrupulous man, and will make use of you if he can. Good-night."

CHAPTER VI.

For some weeks I continued my duties at Dunnett House without anything of importance occurring. Dr. Beroni seemed to have abandoned his investigations into the theory of thought-reading, or at least to have abandoned any idea of availing himself of my aid in respect of them. All the doctor's energies were thrown into his physical studies. At times he seemed to believe himself to be on the point of some great discovery,—then he would relapse into the weariness of disappointment; but his resolution never flagged. He devoted more attention now to the application of electricity in his experiments, and my work was often toilsome and uninteresting. I knew nothing of the aim of all my labour; that, however, did not matter to me. I was more concerned in an impending examination in anatomy, than in Dr. Beroni's secret.

One thing, however, disappointed me. I saw nothing of the doctor's daughter. I could not have banished the image of Ina Beroni from my mind if I had tried; and I had no wish to try. I felt a strong interest in the girl,—so beautiful, so solitary, so charming in her manner. Her eyes had seemed to me to tell, not only of unusual powers of attraction and sympathy, but of a power of passion and devotion unsuspected by herself. She was, indeed, a glorious creature; whatever might be her fate,—whether to meet one on whom she could bestow the wealth of her heart, or to die as she was, living now, a recluse, as much out of the world as if she were in a convent.

One evening, however, she came into the library for a moment while I happened to be there.

"You are looking very pale, Miss Beroni," I said. "I am afraid you don't take enough exercise. Have you been out to-day?"

"No, I have not," she answered with a smile; "in fact I very seldom go beyond the garden."

"Now that won't do," I returned. "Your health must suffer in the long run. Your father would tell you the same, but he is too busy. Will you promise to take half-an-hour's sharp walk every morning?"

Ina smiled again. It seemed new and pleasant to her to have

any one to care for her enough to prescribe any change in her way of living.

"Well, for a month, I will promise," she said, still with a smile.

"Very well; we will see how the prescription answers by that time. And there is another thing. How do you amuse yourself? What do you read?"

"I have my music: that is the chief thing," she answered.

"You speak English wonderfully well."

"Ah, yes; I was carefully trained. But I have seen nothing of English society."

"Then let me bring you two or three novels—Thackeray and Anthony Trollope. You will like them, I am sure; and they will tell you more of England in a fortnight than you could ever learn in any other way, if you don't mix with people."

She thanked me, and left the room.

The next evening while I was at Dr. Beroni's, Ina summoned him from the laboratory with some appearance of agitation. He went at once to the dining-room, and soon afterwards returned and said to me:

"I am afraid we must put by our work for to-night, Mr. Glendinning. Lord Danzil has called. He came in the afternoon once or twice, and I—— But at any rate he is here now. You know him; you had better spend the evening with us, if you have nothing better to do."

I did not quite like the manner in which this invitation was given. Dr. Beroni seemed to be thinking more of himself than of me. But I was curious to see on what terms Lord Danzil stood with the family, and I accepted the invitation.

Lord Danzil greeted me, I thought, rather superciliously. He was talking to Ina in an animated way in Italian. Ina listened coldly, I thought. She could be frigid enough when she chose.

Dr. Beroni made no attempt to interrupt the *tête-à-tête*.

Presently supper was brought in, and the conversation became general. I could not quite understand the Italian's behaviour towards his old acquaintance. I knew he disliked him; he had only a few weeks before warned me against him; he had hinted that his lordship was not a welcome visitor. And yet the doctor's manner to him was deferential, almost obsequious. Could the Englishman, I wondered, have some hold over the Italian? Or was it merely that the foreigner had not courage enough to show his dislike for an English lord to his face? The evening was a dull one, and immediately after supper I rose to go.

Lord Danzil accompanied me. He, too, was going back to town by rail.

"Curious old fellow that," he said, as he passed his arm through mine. "I suppose you are rather intimate with them now?"

"No," I replied. "I have been only twice in the dining-room before to-night."

"Ah! and how does the chemistry get on?"

"It is more electricity than chemistry, now," I answered. "At least it is a jumble of the two. I can't make anything of it."

"But you're a great swell at all that sort of thing, I'm told? I know something of it myself, but of course nothing compared to you. How do you mean that he makes a jumble of the two?"

I am afraid the flattery told upon me. At least, it threw me off my guard. I described the experiments as well as I could for some time before it occurred to me that possibly I was betraying my employer's secrets. Already, perhaps, I had said too much. I pulled myself up short, and changed the subject. Lord Danzil returned to it once or twice, but he saw it was of no use to try to get me to say more. I was annoyed at myself. This, perhaps, was the meaning of the doctor's warning. I wished he had spoken more plainly. When my companion saw that nothing more was to be said about Dr. Beroni or his laboratory, he became silent, and soon afterwards we separated.

CHAPTER VII.

CONSIDERABLY to my surprise, I passed my examination, and in the fulness of my joy, I gave a dinner to three or four of my friends at the "Buckingham,"—the club of which I have spoken—to mark the event. We were all old chums, and there was no restraint upon our hilarity. After dinner, we adjourned to one of the card-rooms, and began playing for small stakes.

We had been playing for some time—smoking and drinking, meanwhile, of course—when the door opened a little way, and Lord Danzil looked into the room. He was hailed with a shout by one or two of my friends, and, much though I disliked the man, I felt compelled to ask him to join us. About twelve o'clock I felt overpowered with sleep; the reaction from my anxiety about the examination, coupled with the wine and the heated room, was too much for me. I rose from table, threw myself on a couch, and in three minutes was sound asleep.

About an hour after, I woke with an impression that I was in Dr. Beroni's library. The odour of his incense was in the room. I opened my eyes, and saw that Lord Danzil was burning some

pastilles. The other men were sitting at the table or hanging round the fireplace. I was only half awake, and in another minute the strong odour which had roused me acted as a soporific, and again I fell asleep. This time, my sleep was uneasy, and disturbed by strange and unpleasant dreams. A strong feeling of impending danger, seemed to haunt my thoughts. I felt as if I must not sleep—dared not sleep—and yet my muscles refused to act, a heavy languor seized all my limbs, and had my life depended on my rising, I could not have done it.

"Have some of you men been playing a trick on me?" I asked, when I awoke.

"No, my dear fellow, not at all. You've been talking in your sleep. Danzil——"

"What about Danzil?" I asked, glancing round to the other side of the table, where he stood with his hat on, as if ready to go.

"Oh, nothing particular. Danzil seemed amused at your having a nightmare."

"How long have I been asleep?"

"Not a minute; not two minutes, at any rate—I mean since you woke the last time."

"Have I been talking in my sleep?"

"Rather!"

"What have I said? Tell me, Harrington, there's a good fellow; I want to know."

"I couldn't make it out. You talked about the altar and the tripod, and raved about 'Ina,' and how you must lift her up and carry her out, for she was dying. Then you began about chemistry, carbon, and gases, and so many degrees of heat, and so many pounds to the inch, and increased charges, and the big electro-magnets, and so on. I didn't understand a word of it."

"Did Danzil seem interested in what I was saying?"

"Not particularly. At the end he did, rather; he went away when I woke you. But, I say, Glendinning, it's time we all went. Good-night, old man."

On my way home, I could not help a strange, perhaps an unworthy, suspicion of Lord Danzil. Could it be that he had, unnoticed by my companions, thrown me into a mesmeric sleep—that he had used an odour similar to Dr. Beroni's, to renew in my mind the memory of his house, and what I had heard and seen there—that he had used me as a clairvoyant, to find out what was passing in my mind, or in that of my employer? If so, he had not profited much. I knew too little of Dr. Beroni, or his

daughter, or his discoveries, to betray him. But the suspicion that I might have said something which had a meaning for Lord Danzil which it had not for me, was most unpleasant. Henceforth, I was resolved, Lord Danzil and I should be strangers. I would follow the Italian's advice : my only fear was that now it might be too late.

(To be continued.)

Dr. Beroni's Secret.

II.

CHAPTER VIII.

ABOUT a week after the supper-party, on coming down to breakfast, I saw a note, addressed in a fine Italian hand, on my table. I began breakfast, and amused myself for a few minutes by speculating as to who my correspondent could be. At last I broke the seal, and read as follows:

"You had better break off your acquaintance with the Italian doctor. If you suffer yourself to be implicated with him, you will repent it. You are running into danger blindfold. Cease your frequent visits to Dunnett House. Take the advice of a friend, and be warned."

This communication certainly surprised me. At first I set it down as a stupid threat of Lord Danzil's, who wished me out of the way that he might establish his influence over the doctor and Ina. I suspected from his manner towards the girl that he was in love with her. But as I read the letter over again it hardly seemed written in a style that would be natural to him. The sentences were all curt and short. Clearly, whoever wrote it had a strong interest in keeping me away from Dr. Beroni.

I put the note, envelope and all, into my pocket, and went to the hospital. On my way I met Frank Sheldon, an old school-fellow of mine, whom I had lost sight of for some time,—a thoroughly good fellow.

"And what are you doing now, Sheldon?" I asked. "Are you a lawyer, or a doctor, or an engineer? I see by your coat that you are not a parson."

"No," he answered with a laugh. "I've got a place as secretary to the chief of police. What are *you* doing with yourself?"

"I'm a young Sawbones," I answered; "and I'm laboratory assistant to a doctor. Oh, by the way, that reminds me—here's something in your way. I got this letter this morning, warning me not to go back to Dr. Beroni's."

Sheldon looked at it curiously, examined the seal and the post-mark, and handed it back to me.

"Do you suspect any one?" he asked.

"Well, I have an idea that it comes from Lord Danzil. The fact is, Dr. Beroni has a very pretty daughter, the loveliest girl——"

"Burn it, then," broke in Sheldon with a smile. "His object is plain enough."

"But I should like to find out if he really did write it, or get it written, rather, and tax him with it."

"Oh, stuff!" answered my friend; "what use would there be in that?" And so we parted.

But that night, as I made my way from my lodgings to the railway station, to go as usual to Dr. Beroni's, I had the uncomfortable sensation of being followed. I seemed to be an object of interest to two men, one of whom, an Englishman, kept me in sight a good part of the way, while the other, evidently a foreigner, gave me a scrutinising glance at the booking-office, and took his seat in the compartment next to mine. Probably the writer of the mysterious letter wished to frighten me out of Dr. Beroni's house. I determined that he should not succeed.

A longing had come upon me to see Ina Beroni again. I could not help a superstitious feeling that, as my dream had foreshadowed, her fate and mine were in some way intermingled, but apart from that I found myself continually thinking of her, trying to recall her features and the sweet expression of her face; and one morning, instead of going to the hospital, I set out for Dunnett House. I remembered that she had promised to take a short walk each forenoon, and I thought it was possible that I might meet her in one of the dreary deserted lanes that lay around her home.

I was not disappointed. I had not walked far from the station when I saw her tall, slight figure, in a picturesque cloak of some foreign fashion, drawing nearer between the leafless hedgerows. I hastened forward to meet her, and she greeted me shyly, but with manifest pleasure. She was attended by the same diminutive maiden whom I had once or twice seen before. Ina and I had a long and delightful talk. She spoke of her childish days, spent under a bright Italian sun—of St. Petersburg—Constantinople—Venice,—hardly a capital of Europe had not at some time or other been her home.

We talked of the picture-galleries of other lands, and compared notes about the pictures we most admired. She was more charming in conversation than I had dreamt of finding her. She took the keenest interest in every subject we talked of, and her beautiful eyes lighted up her face, as she told me of the glorious interiors of the old Italian churches.

In three days I met her again. She did not ask why I was wandering among the lanes beyond East London instead of being at work, nor did I make any attempt at explanation. I did not trouble myself to consider whether Dr. Beroni would approve of our proceedings, nor whether I was justified in seeking the girl's love. We were together, and that was enough.

As time went on, our meetings grew more and more precious, though we did not talk so freely as at first. The silence was never embarrassing. There was no talk of love, but surely, I thought, she must know. And I did not need the little blush with which she gave me her hand at meeting, nor the gentle sadness in her eyes at parting, to tell me I was right.

"Does Lord Danzil ever come to the house now?" I asked one day.

"Yes," replied Ina; "he has been with my father pretty often lately. Mr. Glendinning, I do not like that man."

"Neither do I."

"I am afraid of him."

"Well I am hardly afraid of him, but I believe he is an unscrupulous fellow, and I don't fancy he is very fond of me. Where did your father meet him?"

"In Florence, three—four—years ago. They were great friends then; but since he came to see us here in England I have fancied that my father disliked him too. Yet he comes to the house pretty often."

"Do you always see him when he comes, Miss Ina?"

"Sometimes; not always," she answered with a blush.

That very afternoon I met Lord Danzil on my return to town. He greeted me coldly, and I was passing on with a cool nod, when he suddenly stopped.

"I don't know whether you think it a gentlemanly thing, Glendinning, to play your silly tricks on me; but I can tell you one thing, my good fellow, it won't succeed."

"Tricks! Lord Danzil!" I exclaimed. "It seems to me you are hardly the man to talk of playing off tricks. I have not forgotten what happened after dinner that night at the 'Buckingham.' But I have been playing no tricks on you, nothing of the kind."

"I don't know what you mean about that evening at the 'Buckingham,'" he returned. "I know you fell asleep after it, and had a nightmare apparently, which was not wonderful. But do you mean to tell me you don't know anything of this?"—and he pulled a letter out of his pocket, and gave it to me as he spoke.

It was a warning that he should discontinue his visits to Dr. Beroni. The handwriting was different from that of the letter I had received, being round and bold, but the style, almost the language, was the same. I was speechless for a moment, utterly bewildered. Was Lord Danzil, instead of being the hunter becoming himself involved in the toils of some hidden foe? Or was it that he had repented of the attempt to frighten me away from the Italian's house, and thought to disarm suspicion effectually by pretending that he had himself received a letter of the same kind?

I looked hard at him, but his face—the face of a man of the world—told me nothing. Still, I thought it only fair to warn him that if he had an enemy, I was not the man who had threatened him.

“I know nothing whatever about it,” I said coldly, handing him back the letter.

He looked at me with an incredulous smile. Evidently he did not believe me. That, I considered, was his affair.

CHAPTER IX.

THE day after meeting Lord Danzil, I had another note warning me not to continue my visits to Dr. Beroni's. It was in the same handwriting,—the same style—the same sort of paper and envelope as the last; but couched in much sterner language. My motives, said the writer, in going so often to the Italian's house, were suspected. If I valued my life, I would renounce his acquaintance.

I took this note to Sheldon, and mentioned that Lord Danzil had received a similar one,—or pretended to have done so,—and had accused me of sending it to him.

My friend looked puzzled. “Did you think he was telling the truth?” he asked.

“Really I can't tell; if he was acting a part, he did it very well.”

“Leave both notes with me,” said Sheldon. “This last is a regular threatening letter, and I can call in the help of the police to discover, if possible, who sent it. You suspect no one but Lord Danzil?”

“No one.”

“You haven't an enemy, have you?”

“I haven't an enemy in the world; and yet I could not help fancying that I was followed when I went to Dr. Beroni's the other evening.”

"Why not give up going there?"

I shook my head.

"Ah!" said my friend suddenly. "Has this Italian doctor a sister, or a daughter? Is there a girl in the house?"

"Yes, he has one daughter."

"Pretty?"

"Very!"

"I should think that explains it, then. She may have an Italian lover who is jealous of both you and Danzil. You're not—what! old fellow?—you're not seriously in love with the girl? Well, I can sympathise with you, for the fact is, I'm an engaged man myself—such a sweet girl! I'll introduce you some day. But as to this matter,—if you won't give up going there, buy a life-preserver, and use it if need be."

That afternoon, as I left my lodgings to go to Dunnett House there was a storm of wind and rain. It would be easy to discover whether my suspicions of being followed were correct, for there would be few people abroad on such a night. For a time I could not even fancy that any of the passers-by showed particular interest in my movements, and I was beginning to laugh at my own suspicions, when happening to glance backwards, I distinctly saw a shadow following mine along the black and gleaming pavement.

The figure was too well hidden by an umbrella and a long Inverness cape for me to form an idea of what the man might be like. I crossed the roadway and dived down the first turning I met on the other side. But the figure did not follow me. I could not get to the station in time to catch my train, without returning to the main street, and when I did so my friend in the long Inverness cape had disappeared. Still I had the uncomfortable feeling that a pair of eyes might be at that moment watching me from some doorway.

I ran on towards the station, bent only on catching my train; and sure enough, as I pushed my way towards the platform, I caught sight of the tall man I had seen in the street, apparently examining one of the time-tables hung on the wall. Whether he had had no idea of following me after all, or whether he had not seen me cross the street, or whether he had thought it wiser to come straight to the station, guessing that I must turn up there sooner or later, I could not feel certain.

Soon after my arrival at Dunnett House, Dr. Beroni proposed that we should renew our thought-reading experiments.

"I am tired of this chemistry, and so forth," he said: "let us amuse ourselves for once."

Of course I gladly consented, since this meant, probably, a meeting with Ina; and I noticed that although the doctor spoke of amusements, he provided himself with a pencil and memorandum-book, with which he could note the results we might obtain.

We went into the dining-room; soon Ina entered, and our experiments began. It may have been that the long talks Ina and I had had together had brought our minds into a more perfect harmony, for we soon discovered that we could guess much more easily at each other's thoughts than we could at those of Dr. Beroni.

The Italian seemed delighted at this discovery. He was never tired of practising upon us. We would stand opposite each other, she with a book in her hand, I looking steadfastly at her face. She would run her finger down the page till her father gave a signal, then look down to see what word her finger was pointing at, and I, keeping my eyes on her face, would guess at the word. Out of ten trials I was generally right six times, and of the other four attempts, two would be failures, and two partially successful, that is, I would guess a wrong word but one resembling the right one either in sound or in sense. I could give no explanation of the method by which I guessed. I submitted my will mentally to Ina's, for the moment, and then I spoke the word which came uppermost, as it were, just as one beginning to play an instrument hardly knows sometimes what tune it is he will play.

At other times the doctor posted one of us in the lobby, while the other remained with him. Then I fixed my thoughts upon a certain subject of which I made a note on a piece of paper, and Ina guessed at it, succeeding about three out of four times. I was not so much surprised at this as Dr. Beroni, seeing that there was hardly an ordinary subject of conversation that had not been discussed between us.

We went on till rather a late hour, and then sat down to supper. As we did so, a new experiment occurred to me. Without saying anything, either to the doctor or his daughter, I fixed my attention upon the door of the room, and wished with all my might that Ina would think of it. I took care not to look at it, or at her, and busied myself with my plate. To my delight, while she was speaking to her father, Ina turned half-round and glanced at the door, as if to assure herself that it was closed. I continued wishing, and in a minute or two I was rewarded by seeing her rise, open the door, glance outside, close it, and return to her seat.

"What is the matter, Ina?" said her father.

"I wanted to see that the door was closed," she answered; "I had the door on my mind."

My face told the doctor that I had produced this sensation. He was overjoyed, and took a long note of the phenomenon.

As I bade Ina good-night, she said, "I think you are very unpolite."

"What have I done, Miss Beroni?" I asked in surprise.

"I obeyed you in thinking of the door," she returned; "and I think you might have gone over to the fireplace to oblige me. I have been silently trying to make you go for the last ten minutes."

We both laughed, but the doctor took it seriously, and produced his note-book once more.

In the lobby I said to him, "By the way, Dr. Beroni, I have a fancy that I am watched, and sometimes followed, on my way here."

I spoke carelessly, but no sooner had I finished my sentence than I saw surprise, apprehension, terror, in the Italian's face.

"Do you know anything about it?" I asked bluntly.

"I? No, no; certainly not. I have not an idea. But the roads are lonely about here; ah, yes, the roads are lonely, and the night is dark. You might be robbed and murdered, and no one know till the next day. Perhaps you had better come to me no more."

"Nonsense, Dr. Beroni!" I exclaimed. "I am not a child, to be frightened by a thing of that kind. I don't know why I spoke of it."

"Well, it would be a pity—a very great pity to give up our experiments just now. If even twice more—if you could come even two more times—I cannot do without you."

"I don't know what you mean," I returned; "I am perfectly willing—anxious indeed—to come regularly, as before. I don't mind this a straw."

I was glad I had not mentioned the threatening letter, and felt rather annoyed that he should take it for granted that I would give up my engagement because I had been followed in the street.

"You are brave, I have no doubt," he answered; "yet there is danger, that is, there may be danger, from these villains. Yet if you would come but two or three times——"

"I say again, I am quite willing to come so long as you need my services," I replied, as I turned to the door.

Just then Ina appeared at the dining-room door. I thought

she wanted to know what was detaining her father. He stepped up to her and said a word or two in Italian. Instantly her face changed. I saw in her face the surprise, consternation, fear, which I had a minute or two before seen in her father's. She seemed about to speak, when her father checked her by a look, and speaking rapidly and angrily in a low tone, motioned that she should go back into the dining-room.

"Is there not another way by which you could come, Mr. Glendinning?" he said to me, when he had closed the door.

"Certainly—I could take another line of railway and drive from the Three Elms."

"Then I wish you would do so. I have foolishly said a word or two which needlessly alarmed my daughter. She is very timid, and easily frightened, and it is true that we are in a very lonely situation here. I should like to be able to tell her that you will travel by another way in future, and that there will really be no danger in your coming two or three times more."

"Do you think Lord Danzil can possibly have anything to do with it?" I asked.

"Ah! I should think that very possible—very likely indeed. Avoid that man, my dear young friend; shun him."

"But why should he play me such a trick?"

"Ah! how can I tell?"

"Well, Dr. Beroni, I will come by the Three Elms next time. Good-night."

CHAPTER X.

BEFORE the time had come for another visit to Dunnett House, I received a letter from Dr. Beroni, in which he said that he was forced to go to Italy on urgent private business, and he would let me know when he returned. I thought that I had no right to make any attempt to see Ina during his absence, though I knew the poor girl must be terribly lonely.

I received the doctor's letter on Monday. On Wednesday evening I felt a very strong desire—almost a necessity,—to go to Dunnett House and see that all was right. But I could give no reason for doing so, and I tried to conquer the vague impression that I ought to go to Dr. Beroni's, and busy myself with my books. That, however, I found a hopeless task. So I went out for a sharp walk with my pipe for company.

I returned about ten o'clock, and to my intense surprise I found waiting for me in my rooms, the small, silent maiden whom I had often seen walking with Ina.

She jumped up when I entered and began talking to me rapidly

on her fingers. Till that moment I had no idea that she was dumb. I could not make out her meaning, and handed her a pencil and paper. She was in such a state of excitement that she could hardly write—

“Come, come at once. There is some one shut up in the master’s room.”

That was the message the dumb girl had brought me. I turned and left the house with her, and hurried through the wet, deserted streets to the railway station. Fortunately we just caught a train, but the numerous stoppages made our journey intolerably slow. It was half-past ten before we reached the miserable roadside station where we alighted. Of course no conveyance of any kind was to be seen. In my impatience I broke into a run, but Annette kept up with me wonderfully.

We were not far from the house when she laid her hand on my arm and drew me out of the road, into a little recess into the tall hedge, a gateway that led into the fields. In another moment a tall form passed on the other side of the way, walking rapidly. I could hardly make it out through the rain and the darkness, but I fancied the figure was that of Lord Danzil. I would have overtaken and challenged him, but again the little maiden beside me laid a warning hand on my arm. I shook off her grasp, and turned to follow him, but Annette clung to me, showing such terror, and such anxiety that I should go at once to the house, that I obeyed her.

In five minutes more we were ringing at the door of Dunnett House. A housemaid admitted us, and Annette rushed into the dining-room, where we found Ina, pale and trembling.

“What is the matter, Ina?” I cried.

She could hardly speak, but by degrees I learned that, happening to go into the library some three hours before, she had been surprised by seeing a light under the door of the inner room. She fetched Annette and the other servant, and they tried to open the door. It was locked. They went round to the entrance opening to the lane. It had evidently been forced, but was now secured on the inside.

“Why did you not send for the police?” I asked, as I turned to go to the library.

“We did not even know where they were to be found; and I did not know whether my father would like a public disturbance made about it,” she answered, as we crossed the hall. “I thought the best thing was to lock the library door, and send for you.”

I unlocked the door and entered. All was in darkness and

undisturbed. When I tried the door of the inner room it opened readily. But, holding up my light, I could see that someone had been there, someone who had been turning over my work. My instruments were displaced, bottles of chemicals had been moved, my notes had evidently been tampered with, and my records of our last experiments were gone.

"Thank Heaven that is all!" said Ina.

When we went into the laboratory it seemed as if someone had been recently at work there. One of the retorts looked as if some of its contents had been removed.

"Has Lord Danzil been here since your father left?" I said to Ina.

She blushed painfully, and her eyes fell.

"Yes; once," she answered.

"Did he come into this room?"

"No; he was only in the dining-room," she replied in a low tone.

I made fast the entrance which led through the narrow passage to the lane. Then I secured the door which led from the laboratory, and that which opened into the library.

"I will sleep here to-night on one of the sofas," I said. "Annette can bring me some rugs."

"But I can't stay here till papa comes back," said Ina. "If you had not come, I don't know what I should have done. I can't stay after you have gone."

"We'll see about that in the morning. I will telegraph to Dr. Beroni, and perhaps I can find some corner for you and Annette to take refuge in for a day or two."

"Oh, pray, pray do!" said Ina earnestly.

"Well, I will," I replied.

I lay down on the library sofa and closed my eyes, but I could not sleep. Dr. Beroni's strange theories and practices as to mental affinities—his secrecy about his scientific investigations, which would not allow even his assistant to share his ideas—his tolerance of Lord Danzil whom he plainly disliked and distrusted; Danzil's unaccountable curiosity, which led him (as I believed) even to the point of surreptitiously breaking into the doctor's laboratory, and prying into its secrets—his connection with Ina, who seemed to fear as well as to shun him; the lonely and deserted condition of the beautiful girl whom I was so anxious, yet so impotent to serve; the mysterious warning I had twice received—all combined to produce a feeling such as one might experience who was led with half-blind eyes through a land where there was no sunshine, no free wind of Heaven, but damp

mists and ever deepening twilight ; where what seemed a friendly warning, might be a voice that lured only to destruction. These fancies crowded my mind while I lay awake, and filled my dreams when at length I fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

NEXT morning, I asked Ina for Dr. Beroni's address, that I might telegraph to him what had occurred. She gave me an address at Rome from which, she said, a message would be forwarded to him, wherever he might be. I then went into the city to see Sheldon, promising Ina that I would return as soon as I had found lodgings for her and her maid.

I found my friend Sheldon at the office in Scotland Yard.

"Hullo, Glendinning!" he exclaimed, when I entered. "I was just going to write to you. I think I've found out something about your anonymous correspondent."

"Have you?" I answered. "But wait till you hear what I have to tell you."

I then told him what had happened at Dunnett House the previous day.

"I think we can stop that sort of thing," he remarked quietly.

"But the first thing to do is to find some secure refuge for Miss Beroni," I rejoined. "She is in a state of great agitation, and ought not to be left unprotected in that lonely house. My belief is that Danzil has been forcing himself on her since her father left."

"Well, perhaps I can help you there," answered my friend, after a moment's thought. "Miss Austin, the young lady I am engaged to, is an orphan, and supports herself by giving music lessons. She has very nice rooms near Hanover Square, and if there are a couple of spare bedrooms in the house, that would suit very well."

I jumped at the idea, and Sheldon wrote me a few lines of introduction to Miss Austin.

"But tell me," said I, "what you have found out about those letters of mine. How could you possibly manage it?"

"Oh! there was no insuperable difficulty about that," he answered. "I noticed by the post-mark that the letters had both been posted in the W. C. district, and I also noticed the name of the maker of the envelopes, in small raised letters, on the edge of the slip that folds down."

"But that was nothing," I said; "there must be thousands of people who use the same maker's envelopes."

"Wait a bit," returned Sheldon. "I got one of our best detectives to help me. We agreed that the first thing to be done was to find all the stationers' shops in the W. C. district where this particular maker's—Lund's—envelopes were kept. I gave directions through a superintendent to the men before they went on duty next morning, and before night I had a list of these shops. There were only five. Baker, the detective, went round them all, taking a shop in Little King Street last. It was a small place, where all sorts of small wares, besides stationery, were sold by a couple of sisters, respectable people. The young woman he addressed could remember nothing at first—lots of foreigners came to her shop. But Baker has faith in association of ideas. He showed her your envelope, and asked her to show him the box from which it came. The box was nearly full. 'Come now,' he said, 'it can't be very long since you began this box. Where did you bring it from?' 'From that parcel,' she answered, pointing to one on a top shelf. 'Just bring it down and let me look at it,' said Baker. 'Why, there's only two boxes out of the parcel. You can't have had them long in stock.' 'No, only three or four months,' answered the girl. 'Then how long is it since you went up the steps to bring down this second box?' Both sisters were listening then, and they began to talk together, comparing notes of their various customers. At last one of the girls said she was pretty sure she had fetched down the box about three weeks before, to sell some of the envelopes, and that the customer was a young woman, apparently a servant.

"The shop-girl did not know who the young woman was, but she thought she had seen her before, and would know her again. So Baker instructed her to take the young woman's name and address if she should return, and yesterday he got a note from the girl at the stationer's shop, to say that the servant had been there the day before, and turned out to be maid-of-all-work in a quiet lodging-house frequented by Italians close by. Baker immediately went down to the place, and found, as he expected, that the paper and envelopes had been purchased for an Italian named Corzi, who had a bedroom in the house. Baker set a policeman in plain clothes to watch the door, and went to get some lunch, telling the policeman where to find him. Before Baker had finished his lunch, the man came to him, saying that the Italian had just come out and was then in a foreign restaurant in the square. So the detective and his man went into the restaurant, and sat down near the Italian. The constable (who had been primed by Baker), in the course of the conversation, let fall the words—'Dunnett House.' The instant they were uttered,

Baker saw Corzi give a perceptible start. He was immensely cautious, and did not look at either of them as long as they were in the place, but when they left he came out too, and stealthily followed the constable home. *That won't do much harm.*"

"I should think he is the fellow who followed me to the railway-station," said I.

"Very likely."

I thanked my friend warmly, and set out for Brougham Street, Hanover Square.

After waiting about an hour Miss Austin came in. She was a tall, active, bright girl, very good-looking, with brown hair and pleasant grey eyes,—every inch an Englishwoman. No secrets or mysteries, no strange sympathetic powers, could be associated with Margaret Austin.

She blushed a little when she saw her lover's handwriting, and I soon told her what I wanted. I said Miss Beroni's father was an Italian doctor, who had gone home for a short time, leaving his daughter with two servants in his house in a lonely neighbourhood,—that the house had been broken into, and that Miss Beroni was naturally afraid to stay there, that she had no friends in this country, and would be grateful if she could find rooms in the same house as Miss Austin.

It turned out that bedrooms were to be had there, and Miss Austin invited Ina to share her sitting-room. "Poor thing," said the English girl, "alone, without friends, in a strange country, and terrified, I daresay, out of her wits. I will cheer her up. Leave her with me, Mr. Glendinning; she will be quite safe here."

After expressing my gratitude, I hurried back to Dunnett House. Everything was ready. The housemaid had already been sent home to her friends, and Ina and Annette were waiting with their trunks packed. I saw the house made secure, and put it in charge of the local police; and before dark Ina was safe under the protection of Miss Austin.

Then I despatched another telegram to Dr. Beroni, giving him the address at which I had left his daughter.

CHAPTER XII.

On the fourth day after I left Ina at Brougham Street, I called in the hope of seeing her. But I found, to my great disappointment, that she had left.

"She got a telegram from her father," said Miss Austin,

"about two hours ago. Here it is; I suppose you may read it."

The message was dated Calais, and merely stated that the doctor would be home that afternoon, and desired Ina to have the house ready for him.

My longing to see Ina increased, till I could bear it no more. I could not resist it, I must go now. I felt impatient till I had bade Miss Austin good-day, and was on my way to the railway-station. Perhaps without knowing it, I was acting with some memory of how a few days before I had refused to obey a similar impulse.

I reached Dunnett House about a quarter-past seven. None of the windows showed any light, but I was not surprised at that; it was the custom in the doctor's household to put up heavy shutters after dark. I rang as usual, but no voice or footstep answered the summons. A great fear came over my heart as I pulled the bell a second time. I could just hear it ringing in some far-off kitchen or passage. I waited in painful suspense. No one came; I felt bewildered, giddy with apprehension. I cried aloud, and pulled again at the bell with all my strength.

After long and useless waiting I hurried back to the railway-station, trying to think that I might be tormenting myself about nothing. Ina might not have arrived yet. Or she might have come, and not finding her father, might have gone back again.

As soon as I reached Brougham Street, I burst into the sitting-room without waiting to be announced.

"She is not there, Miss Austin!" I cried. "Ina is not there, and the house is shut up!"

I got no answer. The room was dark, except for the fire-light, but a slender form rose from the sofa. I rushed forward. It was Ina herself! Hardly knowing what I did, in a tumult of joy, in the reaction from the most terrible fears, I clasped her to my heart.

"Oh, Ina!" I cried; "you are safe, then, after all, thank God!"

She hardly struggled in my grasp, and when she did, her movements were slow and feeble.

I sat down opposite to her, ashamed of my conduct, and trying in vain to find some excuse.

"I have been imagining all sorts of dreadful things, Ina," I said, "because I found the house shut up. I suppose your father did not come after all, and you thought it safer to come here for the night—— But what is the matter? You have been crying. You are trembling. Did you see your father?" I asked.

"No; I don't know when he is coming home," she said, sadly.

"Didn't he say in the telegram he would be here to-day; and ask you to meet him?"

"No," she said, still speaking quietly, "that telegram was a forgery."

"A forgery!"

"Yes. It was not sent by my father at all. I don't even know whether he got your message."

"Then who sent the telegram; and why?"

She was silent.

"Did you go to the empty house?"

"Yes."

"Did you see any one there?"

Again she did not utter a word.

"Well, Miss Beroni," I said coldly, perplexed and hurt by her silence, "I am glad at least that you have got safely back again. I daresay Dr. Beroni will send to me when he comes home. Good-night."

I did not mean to show resentment in my voice, but she must have detected it, for she exclaimed:

"Oh, stay, please! Don't go away."

In a moment I was by her side. And now I could see by the firelight that her eyes were red, and her cheeks stained with weeping. She looked as if she had exhausted her emotion, and could hardly even speak.

"Do tell me what troubles you, dear Ina," I said, taking her delicate hands in mine, "tell me; and, if it is possible, I will help you. I would give all I have, all I am, to serve you."

"I know how good you have been, and you are my true friend. But you cannot help me now."

"Well, but your father will soon be home, and he can help you." (She shook her head.) "And he has friends here. But tell me, who sent the false telegram? Was it Lord Danzil?"

"Yes, it was," she answered; and for the moment her indignation mastered her. "The meanness! The shameful lie! To deceive a helpless girl in that way!"

"And did you see him?"

"Yes; he pushed in when the door was opened. No! don't go," she continued, after a brief pause, for I had involuntarily risen. "Promise me, you will not see him. Think how I should feel if I had his blood, perhaps yours too, on my soul! I wish I had not told you. Oh! promise me!"

"I'll promise to give the wretch no more than he deserves," I said, between my teeth.

"No; promise not to see him at all, not to go to him; or I tell

you not one word more, and you are no longer my friend. You must not attack him, for I—I have promised—to be—his wife.”

“Ina!”

She only covered her face with her hands.

“Oh, Ina! And you knew I loved you.”

“Hush!”

“But you don’t love him; you despise him, and he knows it. Why did you do such a thing? Such a promise is worth nothing. He has been threatening you with what he would do if you rejected him. But what could he do? Nothing. You forget we are in England. Write to him, and tell him you take back your promise.”

She shook her head sadly.

“Ah, you cannot understand. He has an awful power, and he is wicked enough to use it.”

“But you—an innocent girl, hardly ever beyond your father’s roof—how can you be in his power?”

“Don’t question me further. It is too true. Besides, I swore it on the gospels. Even if I had no fear, I must keep my oath.”

I was silent. I heard the outer door open, Miss Austin was coming in, and I could not stay and speak to her.

“Promise me one thing, only one thing,” I said hurriedly. “Don’t see this man again, don’t go out alone for any reason,—till your father comes home; and then tell him all. And tell him how you really feel towards Lord Danzil. Will you do this?”

“Yes, I will,” she said, and just raised her eyes to mine before I left the room.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEXT day I got a letter from Sheldon: “Don’t have any more to do with the Beronis than you can help. He is mixed up with an Italian society, called ‘The Brothers of the People.’ Corzi is one of them. I daresay his precious committee doesn’t approve of your being so thick with the doctor. If they get into their heads that you are a spy, you’ll have one of those needle things into you before long.”

At last I heard from Dr. Beroni. He had come home, and of course I went to his house at once. The Italian received me with great frankness.

“No wonder my daughter was alarmed,” he said; “any one might have been alarmed. And I am very glad she sent for you, a kind friend, who knew how to hold his tongue, and did not

trouble the police. I believe you were quite right in thinking that Lord Danzil was concerned in that little affair, though of course I am only telling you my suspicions. The fact is, he and I carried on many experiments together some time ago. We were unsuccessful, and the thing came to an end. He persists in saying that he has a right to share in the fruits now, though he never was of the least use, and has not even touched a crucible for years. He even threatened—but no matter. He shall never know. And I will succeed; I must succeed; I *shall* succeed!”

Whether the doctor succeeded or not, I did not care a straw, and I daresay I showed my carelessness in my face. What I wanted to know was whether he would defy Lord Danzil, and profess himself ready to undergo any sacrifice rather than give his daughter to such a scoundrel.

“So his lordship did not make much by his raid, after all,” said the doctor, rubbing his hands. Somehow I did not quite believe him. His eyes belied his words. He must have noticed that I doubted him, for he added: “He could not learn much, could he, before I find it out myself?”

“I really don’t know, sir,” I answered; “but you know he came here again. Miss Beroni has told you——”

“Yes; oh, yes,” said the doctor, with a smile. “That certainly was rather a rough way of wooing; English, perhaps. No wonder the poor child was alarmed, but that will soon be forgotten. It is a good match,—an alliance with one of your noble houses.”

“You never mean to consent to a marriage between your daughter and this Lord Danzil?” I said slowly.

“That is a family matter, Mr. Glendinning,” replied the Italian, drawing himself up. “I hardly see by what right you discuss it.”

“And you will sell your own flesh and blood that this wretch may keep your secret!”

The Italian started. For a moment there was a steely glitter in his eyes that I did not like.

“What are all the secrets of chemistry,” I exclaimed, “compared to her happiness?”

His look changed; he even smiled.

“You take this matter too seriously,” said he. “If Lord Danzil is a little wild, and fond of his own way, perhaps his wife may improve him.” [“*His wife!*” I thought. “God help her!”] “But in any case, they are now betrothed. I cannot ask my daughter to break her faith.”

I hated the man at that moment, worse, almost, than I hated Lord Danzil himself.

“But to change the subject. I find that I have to leave England

very soon,—in a week at furthest; in three days perhaps. I shall be very fully occupied, and in consequence of this change in my plans, I shall not require your most valuable assistance in future."

I was so surprised that I made no reply.

"I believe this is the amount I owe you," he added, tendering me a cheque.

It was plain that the doctor had determined not to allow me to interfere in Ina's affairs. He thanked me with precise politeness for my services, and turning to his work—he had been sitting at one of the writing-tables in the library—he began to write before I left the room.

I felt that I was being shamefully treated, but I was too proud to complain. As I stood at the outer door, the thought that I should probably never meet Ina again—the thought of her fate, and my helplessness to prevent it—almost overpowered me.

At that moment the little dumb girl opened the door, and after a second or two, closed it with a loud bang. Evidently she wished the master of the house to believe that I had left. Then beckoning me to follow, she led me into a small room behind the dining-room, and disappearing by a second door, left me alone. In another minute Ina entered. The room was only lighted by the lamp outside in the hall.

"Mr. Glendinning," she said, in her sweet low voice, "you will not think me what you call unmaidenly, that I have sent for you to bid you good-bye. Your kindness deserves that much."

"Ina," I said in a whisper, "why should you be sacrificed for any——"

"Hush!" she said softly. "There is no escape for me; good-bye."

And without look or touch she left me, kneeling where she had stood.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was on Tuesday that Dr. Beroni came back to England. On Thursday evening I felt once again that powerful longing to see Ina. It seemed as if she were calling me, drawing me by an invisible chain. I had experienced this sensation twice before: once when Lord Danzil ransacked the doctor's laboratory, and a second time when he enticed Ina into meeting him, and extorted from her a promise to marry him. The first time I had resisted the impulse to fly to her relief, the next time I had obeyed the warning, but had not been in time. Could she, I wondered, be at that moment exerting the mysterious sympathy

which existed between us? Was she once more calling me to her aid? I would not risk another refusal to obey the summons. I would at least go to Dunnett House, and ascertain that all was well.

When I alighted at the station I noticed at the farther end of the opposite platform a tall figure, closely resembling that which I had seen dogging my footsteps in the streets of London. But I had no time to pay attention to him, and in another minute I was running along the narrow lane between the hedges, that I knew so well.

Soon I came in sight of the house, looming large and black against the darkness of the winter sky. I stood breathless at the door, and pulled hard at the bell. All was still. Again I pulled, and then hardly waiting for an answer I knocked with my stick on the door. Still no answer came. Once more the sickening fear of some unknown evil filled my heart. I left the front door, and ran round to the door in the wall which opened into the narrow passage leading to the laboratory. I tried to open that door, and to my surprise it yielded readily.

I rushed in, and fell on my face. I had stumbled over some one lying in the passage. I rose to my knees, put my arms round the fallen man, and tried to lift him up, but I could not. I passed my hand over his face; it was warm; but what was this? My hand was wet. Could it be wet with blood? I started up in horror, and opened the door that led to the lumber-room. That too, was in darkness, but a light shone from under the laboratory door.

I dashed forward, opened it, and was met by a sickening, overpowering smell—the fume of charcoal.

I looked at my hand; yes, it was covered with blood.

But what was that? I saw two figures lying on the floor near the large instruments in the middle of the room. Ina was there—Ina, and beside her was Lord Danzil.

In an agony of terror I lifted the girl from the floor and carried her into the library. I thought she had probably fainted, and then succumbed to the poisonous air. I was right. After dashing cold water plentifully on her face she revived and was able to sit up.

“Where am I?” she asked dreamily.

“You are safe now,” I answered; “you fainted, and were nearly choked with the charcoal stove. But I must try and save Lord Danzil.”

I went back and tried to lift him. He was dead. His left hand still grasped the end of a chain which was hung by an

insulated wire inside a crucible. The wire led to an electric accumulator close by in which an enormous quantity of electricity had been stored. A current of terrible force had been led into the crucible, probably in order to fuse something at a very high temperature, but Danzil had by accident touched the chain and received in his body the full force of the shock. He was past all help of mine.

I went back into the library.

"What is the matter with Lord Danzil?" said Ina anxiously. "My father went out for a little air, as he often does in the evening, and while he was out Lord Danzil called. He went into the laboratory, and I heard a shout, as if of delight, and then a heavy fall. When I went in to see what was the matter he was lying on the floor, and I thought for the moment he was dead. I suppose I fainted. Has Lord Danzil hurt himself? Let me go in."

"No, no, Ina," I said; "don't go in now. He has hurt himself with one of the machines, but I will see to him. I wish you would call one of the servants; I want to send a message to the railway-station."

"They haven't come back yet," she answered. "We leave for Italy to-morrow, and they have gone into town about some packing-cases. But I feel ill; I think I will go upstairs, if I can't be of any use to Lord Danzil. Ask my father to come up to me as soon as he comes in, please."

She spoke wearily and with difficulty, and I had to support her up the staircase.

She stopped on the way, and said:

"But how did you come here?"

"I felt as if I must come—as if you were calling me," I answered.

She smiled. "Yes," she said; "I thought you would know. I remember trying hard not to faint, and it flashed through my mind that I was alone in the house, and I wished, oh! so earnestly, that you would come, and then a darkness came on."

"Don't think of it, dear Ina. Lie down at once; I won't let you be left long alone."

I ran back to Dr. Beroni, got a light, and examined him. He had been stabbed in the back. He had hardly breathed after receiving the blow. In the breast of his coat had been thrust a paper bearing the words in Italian—

"The death of a traitor."

All was explained now. The doctor had belonged to one of the

secret societies of which Italy at that time was full. Somehow or other, whether by means of the mesmeric sleep, or from hints let fall in the course of their former intimacy, or through the close watch which he had kept on the doctor owing to his desire to share his secrets, and his passion for Ina, Lord Danzil had become aware that Dr. Beroni was an "Italian Brother," and he had threatened to publish the fact, and whatever else he knew of the society. Probably he pretended to more knowledge of the matter than he ever had, but Dr. Beroni knew that the penalty of revealing even one of the society's secrets, even the name of a single member, was death. This, then, was the chain by which Lord Danzil bound the doctor to himself, and compelled Ina to betroth herself to him.

These things passed through my mind as I stood looking at the corpse. It was a miserable death to die. Plainly, he had been followed by Corzi, or some other agent of the Brotherhood, and attacked as he was returning to the laboratory after his short walk.

I went back into the library to close the windows, which I had opened, to allow the charcoal fumes to escape. As I passed Danzil's dead body lying on the floor, I glanced into the crucible in which his hand still rested, and there I saw some shining stuff, —bits of thick glass, apparently. I carelessly took up a piece to examine it. I held it up to the light.

A diamond!

Yes; a solid piece of diamond. The substance was lying in the retort in little bits, about the size of grains of corn, some larger, some smaller,—real, true, manufactured diamonds.

This, then, was the doctor's secret! This was what all our experiments had tended to. This was why Lord Danzil had been so anxious to discover what progress was being made in our investigations. This explained, too, my sudden dismissal. The doctor, feeling himself on the eve of the discovery, had thought it safer to get rid of me, lest I should learn too much.

Lord Danzil must have known, from his former experiments with the Italian, and from his manner, perhaps, that the critical time had come. He had succeeded in surprising Dr. Beroni in the very moment of his success, but in seizing the prize he had lost his life.

I carefully emptied the crucible into my handkerchief, and then threw into it some bits of metal. Then I burned all the notes relating to recent experiments, either in my handwriting, or in that of Dr. Beroni.

I had hardly done so, when the servants returned home. I sent

them for the police, and left the house in their care, leaving it to Annette to break to Ina in the morning the news of her father's death. From the girl's look I fancied that she regretted the doctor as little as I did.

* * * * *

My story is nearly told.

Corzi was never seen in England again. Margaret Austin took charge of Ina, and stayed with her till the day came when George Sheldon and I claimed our brides.

As for the diamonds, they were Ina's fortune—not a large one, but enough to start me in my career, and afford us a moderate income. Once or twice I tried to repeat the old experiments, but I could not succeed. I had forgotten too much—and the final process I had never learned. Besides, we had enough; and all through the happy years I have lived with Ina, I have hardly once regretted that the doctor's secret perished with him.

A Haunted Castle.

A CASTLE, now turned convent, caps a brow
 Where shining sprays the olive interweaves,
 Named from a legend no one half believes;
 For who has faith in old-time wonders now?
 A stranger sits beneath a great gnarled bough
 And muses half-asleep, till dream deceives
 His surlier sense, while glamour's spectral thieves
 Dart in and shift the scenes, he knows not how.

Before his eyes a mirage is outspread;
 The storied miracle, disclosed anew,
 Takes breathing shape, with burst of life is born:
 Now the ghosts live again this long while dead,
 Faces are seen, a cry the groves strikes through;
 By mortal tragedy the air is torn.

KENINGALE COOK.

The Ghost of Manibere Court.

I WANT to invite you to spend half an hour or so in the library of a country-house. It is the hour when cups of tea do circulate. Divers ladies and gentlemen, with the foxhunter of the period, are established in comfortable chairs, and—Mrs. Venables.

“What Mrs. Venables?”

Hush, my dear madam; not so loud, I beg. Why, *the* Mrs. Venables of society fame. Mrs. Venables, about whom little paragraphs are constantly appearing in the society papers. Mrs. Venables, without whom no country-house party is really complete, and whose life, out of the season, consequently consists in a series of pleasant progresses from one house to another, attended by her maid and her diamonds—*the* diamonds which of course you remember she inherited from her father. You *do* remember? Ah, I thought so. It would be a simple impossibility for any one of us who hold a place amongst the “smart people” who constitute society now-a-days to ever pretend that we did not know and admire Mrs. Venables. To know her is to admire her, of course. For one thing, she is the fashion, for another she is, as our cousins say, *just about the* most agreeable and charming woman of the day—independently of her diamonds, and her charming house and her pretty daughters.

A gleam from the lamp falls upon her, as she sits in a comfortable arm-chair, the most perfectly appointed, and yet the most natural-looking woman in the room.

“It is quite impossible,” she is saying; “you wish me to take upon myself the rôle of improvisatrice, and monopolise the conversation for a whole hour! What can I have done that I should draw on myself the odium of a whole roomful of people?”

Then up and speaks our host, who is handing her a cup:

“No story, no tea, Mrs. Venables. We all want to hear her adventure. Now then, a show of hands for Mrs. Venables’s ghost-story!”

The evidence in favour of the story is of course overwhelming, and Mrs. Venables resigns herself to her fate.

“How shall I begin?” she asks. “First let me give anybody who does not wish to be bored to death time to escape.”

There is a pause. No one moves, of course.

"Then I am afraid you will all be very much disappointed," says the lady, settling herself, "for I can only give an unembellished statement of facts, nature not having gifted me with an imagination. But as you all wish it, and there is no 'chiel amang ye takin' notes,' I will try my best to amuse you.—Well then, my adventure, as you call it, took place not a hundred miles from this very house where we are all staying. No, don't be too clever; it was not in this house, but it was in this county. I must not tell you the real names, for the people who owned the house are still living, and you will see, if you have patience to sit the story out, that it would be painful to them to have their identities disclosed. You will all admit that I was a girl about a hundred years ago——"

A chorus of indignant protestations, in spite of which Mrs. Venables goes calmly on—"young, possessed of a great many kind friends and——"

"Handsome," puts in some impudent wight, under cover of the semi-darkness.

("If there are any more of these interruptions I shall be compelled to stop," says our narrator, quietly.)

"Well," she continued, "I used to visit a good deal, for I have been always fortunate in having a number of kind friends. Amongst these the oldest perhaps was Harry Gore. He was one of the most popular men of his set, and no one could have ever had more cordial congratulations upon his marriage. All the gentlemen were dying to be introduced to his wife, an Australian beauty, and the young people of both sexes were delighted to be able to add another house to their happy hunting-grounds.

"I was one of the last to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Gore; and it was only after she had been married a year and after we had made several fruitless attempts to meet at the houses of common friends, that I received an invitation to spend a few days at their country-house, which we will call Manibere Court. The letter was a very cordial one. Mrs. Gore spoke of her anxiety to make my acquaintance, indeed she said she almost felt as if she knew me already, and in fact she quite assumed the tone of an old friend.

"'If you are not afraid staying in our haunted house,' ran the letter, 'we hope you will come to us next week. We shall have a party for Lady B——'s ball. If you are not going there you must come to us for it, and *do* bring your beautiful diamonds. Harry has said so much about them that we are all dying to see them.'

"Of course I cannot remember the exact words, but with regard to those two things, the allusion to the haunted house, and the request to take my diamonds, I feel quite sure. For there were ghost-hunters even in those days, and though a sceptic, I was one of the

most ardent of them. And as to the diamonds (it would be affectation of course to pretend not to know that they were unique), I made rather a joke of the fact that I had been chiefly asked as an appendage to my dressing-case.

"Of course I accepted the invitation, and in due time I turned up at Manibere Court, diamonds and all. As we drew up at the gate at the bottom of the short avenue of lime-trees that led to the house, I thought to myself that a more likely find for a good family ghost of the white-sheet and chain-clanking order, it had never been my fortune to come across.

"A grey stone front, with heavily mullioned windows, brought the picture of Tappington Hall in *the* edition of the 'Ingoldsby Legends' vividly before my mind. There was something just a little depressing too in the wide steps that led up to the terrace with its mouldering balustrade, in the utter absence of any bright colour to relieve the monotony—the gardens being on the other side—and in the dreary rustling of the lime-trees as they bent to the chilly autumn breeze.

"Nor was this impression removed on entering the hall. The present craze for æsthetic browns and greens had not of course come in. But modern mediævalism had just been discovered; Pugin was its prophet, and Mrs. Gore was evidently one of his most advanced disciples. Old oak furniture had been collected from various parts of the country, and made to do duty as family pieces. Ancestral Gores scowled at you from the panelled walls, and armoured figures seemed to threaten one from odd recesses and corners.

"It was quite a relief to escape from these somewhat gloomy surroundings into the bright morning-room looking upon the gardens, and to receive the cordial welcome of Mrs. Gore. She was indeed the most fascinating of hostesses, and withal a very beautiful woman. She had the peculiar knack of making you feel, after the first five minutes, as if you had known her all your life; and though cavillers might possibly find fault with her manner, as being perhaps a trifle too *empresé*, no doubt it was a great deal owing to the freedom of her colonial bringing-up. Besides, who could have the heart to criticise, when whatever defect there might be, arose from an anxious—possibly a too-anxious—wish to please.

"‘So very glad to see you at last, dear Miss Carew!’ as she advanced to meet me. ‘I began to be quite afraid that we were never to know each other. So wrong of Harry not to have been here to introduce us, but now that those poor dreadful partridges have to be shot, I never see him from morning till night. I have taken you at your word, and put you in the haunted room. You are sure you do not mind?’

"Of course I did not mind. I was positively delighted, for in those

days I owned no nerves. I don't say that it is so now, but at that time I was certainly not fanciful, and should have regarded the offer of even a nightlight as a personal insult.

* * * * *

"The ghost at Manibere Court had certainly secured one of the best rooms in the house. It was comfortable, and even cheerful, its three windows commanding a fine view of the gardens and woods backed by the ———shire hills. It was furnished in a delightfully rococo and altogether mixed style which would have sufficed to set on edge the teeth of cultured persons of to-day. The high narrow mantelpiece called aloud for spindle-shanked chairs and chippendale tables, whereas it was evident that up here only a partial reformation from utter Philistinism had as yet been effected. Sundry gaudily covered tablekins cropped up in highly incorrect but convenient places, and a particularly snug but too utterly wrong arm-chair stood clothed in a species of white petticoat beside a severely orthodox carved oak bed.

"'And this is really your dressing-room,' explained Mrs. Gore, indicating a door near the fireplace. 'That absurd Harry insisted on your maid being put in there, lest you should be seized with panic in the night. But if you do not like it, you have only to say so, and I will have her moved.'

"'By no means,' I said. 'Dear old Pinfold has been with me so long, from my childhood in fact, that I think of her comfort almost before my own, and I know there is nothing she will like so much as being near me.'

"'As you please,' said pretty Mrs. Gore with just the slightest ghost of a shrug, 'but if you should change your mind you have only to tell the housekeeper, and have her things moved upstairs at once.'

"I need not say that I did not change my mind. After spending a very happy evening, I found myself in due course in my room with Pinfold brushing out my hair. As our habit was, we were passing in review the various toilettes. Mrs. Gore's dress, of a lovely shade of mauve, just then come into fashion, had particularly captivated Pinfold's fancy, as, with a privileged few, she had watched us from the gallery, trooping into dinner. She was however happy in the conviction that none of the jewellery worn by the other ladies at all came up to mine.

"'There was nothing that could beat even your 'littlest' cross, Miss Florence, let alone your whole parure. What will they say when they see it to-morrow night, I wonder?'

"'They have seen it,' I replied; 'Mr. Gore made me fetch it down after dinner.'

"'Well, to be sure,' said Pinfold, 'what a funny thing for a

gentleman to do! I wouldn't have fetched it then, if I had been you.'

" 'Mrs. Gore wanted to show it to Lady Elizabeth Mogg, who is leaving to-morrow.'

" 'And what did she think of it?' inquired Pinfold, when she had relieved her mind by giving a few hard tugs at my hair.

" 'Nothing much,' I said, impelled by the love of teasing the dear old woman. 'Oh yes, I forgot, Mrs. Gore said it wanted cleaning. Of course you will think she was jealous of it.'

" 'I am sure she was,' returned Pinfold viciously. 'Perhaps she would like to have the job herself.'

" 'She would,' I said. 'She offered to do them for me to-morrow. She has got some wonderful new stuff she does her own with. She is going to give me a lesson, so prepare to have all the big stones dropping out of their settings all over the place. Pooh, you silly old woman! It is all a joke, of course; but possibly she was right, and they really do want cleaning. But now let's get to bed before the clock strikes twelve, or we shall lose all chance of seeing or hearing the ghost; and Pinfold, mind you sleep with one eye open and both ears, so as to be able to come in the moment I call, if anybody should try to play us a trick and frighten us.'

"I have said that I never had a nerve in those days, and I had drawn too many houses blank already to feel much excitement about the ghost. So when Pinfold extinguished my candle and had ceased to move about, I soon dropped into a deep sleep, and allowed the witching hour to pass by unnoticed. How long I slept I could not tell. It might have been one hour, or it might have been two, but when I awoke it was still dark. Not quite dark, however, for as I turned round a thin thread of light struck upon my half-opened eyes. Not daylight though. It was not cold enough or grey enough for that, and as I drowsily considered what it could be, the thin streak penetrated between the curtains and travelled over the bed towards the foot. Could it be Pinfold, and was she walking in her sleep? The possibility of this stopped the words that were upon my lips. I had heard that it was dangerous to wake somnambulists with a shock; so instead of calling, I cautiously withdrew the curtain on one side and peeped out.

"Nerves or no nerves, I can assure you all that the sight I beheld absolutely froze my blood. I don't think I have said that the bed was in a recess, and that the chairs and tables formed cosy little oases in various parts of the large room.

"In a space between my bed and the door of Pinfold's room, stood what it is *selon les règles* of all properly constituted ghost stories to call 'A Figure!' And in truth it would be impossible to describe what

I saw with absolute exactness. There was an indistinctness about its shadowy outlines that prevented me from gaining a clear idea of its shape. Something, I saw, while the cold dew gathered thick upon my brow—something, the faint outlines of which were rendered visible by the light of a shaded lamp, which brought into view the white flowing draperies below, while it left the upper part of the figure in deepest shadow. Lying there, with all my boasted courage ebbing away from every pore of my body, but two ideas were present with me—if only I could in any way summon Pinfold unperceived by my unwelcome visitant; and oh, if it should move! It did move.

“At that minute I did not imagine that terror could have any lower depth, but I was soon undeceived when the figure, after a moment’s pause, began to glide, thank God, not in my direction, but in the direction of the window, where, drawing aside the curtain, it stood, apparently gazing out at the night. The moon was riding fast amongst the clouds, and threw her beams upon that mysterious thing standing silently by my dressing-table; but her light did not suffice to show clearly the outline of the head, which I now saw was hidden in folds of the same shadowy material which disguised the lower part of the shape.

“The idea of a trick never for an instant crossed my mind. Sheer terror paralysed every nerve. After some moments the creature dropped the curtain, and in the same soundless way began to return. I have said there was a large arm-chair beside the bed. In this the figure took up its position, still holding the lamp in such a manner as to keep the upper portion of it in deepest shadow.

“The chiming clock in the hall pealed merrily, but the figure did not move. Great heavens, if it should sit there all night! How long do people take to go mad from fright I wondered! The very effort to lie still produced a longing to move that was almost intolerable.

“If I could only slip out of bed on the further side and take refuge with Pinfold. Would it be possible to make a rush and gain the haven of her room before that horrible thing should have time to glide round, and intercept my flight?

“Should I try? I would.

“One resolute effort would bring me to the edge of the bed. But the bed was an ancient one, and as I tried to move it creaked.

“Still the figure sat motionless. Another movement brought another creak—and, oh horror, my enemy was upon me! With what seemed supernatural quickness, and in the same oppressive silence, it rose and came round to the side of the bed where I was lying. Instinctively I closed my eyes, and strove, until I thought my heart would burst, to breathe regularly and calmly as if I were asleep.

"By the glare, I was made conscious of the light being held close to my uncontrollably quivering eyelids. And in agony I awaited I knew not what. Then the receding light, and I opened my eyes to see the figure flitting aimlessly about the room. But was it aimlessly?"

"All the stories I had ever heard of spirits haunting the spots their ill deed had polluted crowded upon my mind as I watched that figure prosecuting its search.

"Could those tales of ghosts hunting for wills and documents, unrighteously suppressed, be true then after all? Hitherto I had sat in the seat of the scornful when the veracity of such narratives was insisted on. But I would willingly have given my adhesion to the most monstrous of these statements could I have been spared ocular demonstration of their truth. Not one hole or corner of the room did the creature leave unransacked. Drawer after drawer was opened and closed again, not in total silence, but still in the same stealthy manner. How long this would have continued it is impossible to conjecture, but a sudden violent movement on my part put an end to the situation. My attempt to escape had brought me to the very edge of the bed, and in spite of every effort to retain my position, I now felt myself slipping, slipping, on to the floor. It was no use to grapple with the bedclothes in a desperate struggle to recover my position. There was nothing for it but to make the best of a bad business, and to guard against the awkward contingency of falling out of bed head-foremost. With some exertion I righted myself, but the noise I made in doing so would I feared bring my terrible vision once more upon me. In sickening expectation I stood up for a moment with eyes closed; when I opened them the thing was gone. At the same instant I heard Pinfold move in her bed.

"'Miss Florence,' she cried drowsily, 'Miss Florence, what do you want in here?'"

"But once relieved of that awful presence I did not stop to listen. The thought of foul play had not up to the present occurred to me. But now it crossed my mind, and changed all my terror into rage.

"Seizing my bell, I rang it till I pulled it down.

"'Pinfold,' I cried, rushing into her room, both doors of which I saw were now open, 'get up; don't stop to ask me anything. There are robbers in the house. Fly downstairs and call the servants as you go. I will rouse the gentlemen and send them down the front staircase. By that means the thieves cannot escape. I will tell you everything by-and-by.'

"I never waited to see whether the terrified Pinfold obeyed my orders. I flew along the passage and down the staircase, where I already found a party assembling. As it happened, my bell had rung

downstairs, and a startled contingent of butlers, footmen, and various understrappers were mustering in the hall. The grotesqueness of their improvised toilets makes me laugh now as I think of it, but did not strike me at the time as anything at all remarkable. 'Make haste,' I cried, 'there are burglars in the house. They have been in my room. Show me at once where your master sleeps, and I will go with you. Make haste.' The butler's figure was not built for speed, but, thus adjured, he led the way with astonishing alacrity, his costume exhibiting a bold combination of white, with a shepherd's plaid tastefully arranged round his neck.

" 'Get up,' I cried, rushing unceremoniously into the Gores' room, which was of course in total darkness. 'There are thieves in the house. They cannot have got very far yet. Mr. Gore, do wake; get up.'

"To do him justice though, when he did understand the purport of my visit, Mr. Gore lost no time in answering the summons. Before five minutes had elapsed, he assumed the lead of the search-party, and I was left behind to explain matters in detail to my astonished hostess. Considering her impulsive manner, I was surprised to find that after the first shock, she took my story very coolly, and was indeed inclined to pooh-pooh my somewhat incoherent narrative.

" 'You've been dreaming,' she said, laughing. 'It was so wrong of us to tell you all sorts of things about that room. The thing is clear. You were frightened, you went to sleep and had the nightmare. One is so apt to fancy things when one is in a strange room, and alone.'

" 'Fancy things!' I cried angrily. " 'Any one who knows me will tell you that I am not a person to fancy things. It was not a ghost of course; it was a robber, or someone dressed up to frighten me. Besides, I tell you, Pinfold saw it too. Looking for my diamonds of course, which she always keeps safe under my bed.'

"Mrs. Gore looked rather bewildered.

" 'Under her bed,' she repeated softly; 'what a very droll idea! So you are not altogether unprepared for these adventures.'

" 'Not unprepared!' I cried, with a glance at the wrapper which I had hastily thrown round me before I had taken flight. 'Why, if I had expected to appear before society in the middle of the night I should at least have taken care to have my dressing-gown on. As it is, I wonder if you would lend me yours? It might be as well to look a little respectable, to say nothing of its being rather chilly. Why, you have got yours on; how very odd! Do you always wear your dressing-gown in bed?'

"Mrs. Gore burst into a fit of laughter. 'You forget,' she said, 'that I've had plenty of time to put it on while you were frightening

Harry to death. You will find my fur cloak in that wardrobe. We may as well make ourselves as comfortable as we can, for your burglar may want a great deal of catching.'

"But long before the search was over my strained nerves had given way. The utter want of sympathy, nay, the absolute incredulity with which my story had been received, affected me so much that in spite of all attempts at self-command, I burst into a fit of hysterical sobbing.

"And in fact the return of Mr. Gore with the news that the whole house had been ransacked from attic to cellar without even a trace of an open door or window, added to my discomposure, and it only required his politely expressed condolences, and his wife's less thinly veiled contempt, to render my collapse complete. I felt that to spend the rest of the night by myself was a simple impossibility. Aided by Mr. Gore's strong arm I took refuge with Pinfold, and in her room, with both the doors locked, and a perfect blaze of candles, we sat, and 'longed for the day.' There was consolation in the knowledge that Pinfold had also seen the apparition, and was prepared to bear witness to the truth of my story, although like many other excellent people in similar predicaments, it was our fate to be disbelieved.

"Of course no amount of arguments or chaff could ever induce me to deny the testimony of my senses. Besides, was there not the confirmatory evidence of that half-open drawer in my room?

"On one point my mind was fully made up, and that was, not to stay another night in the house; and neither arguments nor jeers sufficed in the least to shake my resolution. Both my host and hostess employed each method of persuasion in turn, and found each fail. My nerves had been too severely shaken, and my pride too sorely hurt, to make the thought of a prolonged sojourn at Manibere Court for one minute endurable. The Gores, on the other hand united in imploring me to remain. 'My flight reflected on their house,' they said. 'It would create an unpleasant impression amongst their guests. The servants would not stay (already two or three of them had declared their intention of leaving and forfeiting their wages), and all these misfortunes would be averted if only I would consent to pass a few more nights under their roof.'

"But, as you all know, I *can* be terribly decided; and even though it should lead to a positive estrangement—which in fact it did—I felt that I could not nerve myself to stay. Up to the last moment Mrs. Gore never ceased pressing me to change my mind, and at last went from entreaties to absolute rudeness when she found she could not gain her point.

"You will all readily believe that it was with a light heart that I heard the gates clash behind me as I took leave of Manibere Court.

Years passed before I saw it again. The Gores chose to make my refusal to risk a repetition of the horrors of that night the ground for a quarrel. I only heard at second-hand that no solution of the mystery had ever been arrived at, and I did receive one formal note from Mr. Gore, hoping that I would not mention my adventure in society, as a rumour of it had already frightened several people from coming to stay with them."

* * * * *

Mrs. Venables's voice stopped.

"Oh thanks so much!" from everybody. "But was that quite the end; did you really never hear anything more?"

"That was the end of my adventure. I thought you wanted to hear a ghost story, and a ghost story with an explanation is no better than one of those conjurors who says he will show you how all his tricks are done—which, by the way, he takes very good care never to do."

"There was an explanation then?" from one of the young ladies. "Oh, do tell us! I am so nervous, I shall never sleep all night."

"It was more than a year afterwards then," resumes Mrs. Venables, "that I was staying at Brighton, when I caught a glimpse of a face I knew in a carriage at a shop door. At once I recognised the dark eyes and brilliant complexion of Mrs. Gore, and I doubted whether I should be the first to make the advance towards closing our silly quarrel. While I was hesitating she saw me, and to my great surprise, greeted me without a trace of coolness and in her old gushing manner.

"‘So glad to see you!’ she said, seizing my hand, and holding it as if she would never let it go. ‘You are staying here; so are we, in ——— Crescent. You will come and see us. You must; I will take no excuse. To-morrow. I shall expect you to tea with me to-morrow.’"

"And did you go?" After an unusually long pause,

"This part of my story is so painful that I hardly like to go on," says Mrs. Venables. "Still, as it all happened so long ago, and as I have not betrayed the real names of my friends, I suppose there can be no harm in telling it now. I arranged, then, to go to tea with Mrs. Gore. It was so long ago that afternoon tea was only just established, and people still dined at seven, and seven-thirty was considered late. I was putting on my things to go, when a message was brought to me that someone wished to see me on business immediately. Guess my surprise at finding the drawing-room in the possession of a serious-looking lady in the uniform of a hospital sister.

"‘There must be some mistake,’ I said. ‘My friend with whom

I am staying is not at home, but if you could explain the occasion of your visit to me——'

" 'Certainly,' said the sister gravely. 'I have come from—— Crescent at the request of Mr. Gore. I believe you had arranged to lunch with Mrs. Gore to-day?'

" 'Had arranged! I was just getting ready to go there now,' I said. 'Has she—surely she has not met with any accident!' The sister shook her head.

" 'We thought you did not know,' she said. 'Poor Mrs. Gore!'

" 'Not ill?' I asked, frightened at the sad expression of her kind face.

" 'Her physical health has never been better,' said the sister; 'but her mind——'

" 'Alas! it was too true, although at first, with that memory of our recognition of the preceding day so fresh in my mind, I could almost have been as ready to suspect Harry Gore and the sedate lady before me of a conspiracy, as Mrs. Gore of mental unsoundness. You will easily realise what a terrible shock this news gave me, totally unprepared as I was for anything of the sort.

" 'We thought you could not have known,' repeated the sister, 'for you might pass several hours, nay even days, in Mrs. Gore's society without detecting the least symptom of insanity, provided certain subjects are not touched upon.'

" 'And what are those subjects?' I ventured to ask. 'It all seems so very sad and strange, I can hardly believe it.'

" 'I dare say you may have noticed, if you were intimate with Mrs. Gore, her extraordinary fondness for jewellery?'

" 'Ah!'

" 'She herself owned some very handsome ornaments given to her by her husband, and you will easily fancy his distress when one day these were missing. Every effort was made to trace them, but in vain, and the search had just been allowed to drop when the interest was suddenly revived. A lady staying at Manibere last year had a very handsome set of pearls stolen from her bedroom. But you look quite pale. I am afraid this sudden news has made you ill.'

" 'I am not ill,' I said, 'but it certainly has given me rather a shock. But pray go on. You do not know how deeply I am interested.'

" 'Within a fortnight,' continued the sister, 'there came a letter from a London jeweller to say that the jewels (which had been fully described in several of the London papers) had been offered to him for sale by Mrs. Gore. Strange to say, the ornaments once in her possession, the extraordinary cunning of insanity seemed to have deserted her. When taxed with her conduct by her grief-stricken

husband, she made no attempt to deny it. Nor did the remonstrances and even tears of her heartbroken parents succeed in awakening in her the slightest sense of shame for what in her irresponsible condition it would be absurd to call a crime.'

"Well, there is little more to say. Poor Mrs. Gore, when I did go to see her, exhibited no traces of mental alienation in her manner. Always restless and impulsive, unless I had been warned to expect it, her natural excitability would not have attracted my particular attention. And I need not tell you that I avoided with special care the subjects of conversation calculated to bring on the fearful paroxysms of excitement from which she occasionally suffered.

"As to any connection between my experiences at Manibere and poor Mrs. Gore's illness, you can all draw your own conclusions. I have my own opinion of course, but as some of us are believers in the supernatural, and some are not, I prefer to keep it to myself, undiscussed and undisputed. Of course the affair was never alluded to by either Mr. Gore or myself, and until to-day I do not think that I have ever related my adventure, as you call it, to more than one or two of my most intimate friends. There can be no harm now though in telling it, seeing that Mrs. Gore, whose insanity rapidly passed into the acute stage, has been at rest for several years, and Harry happily married to a charming wife. There are no ghosts now at Manibere, and the girls and I look forward to our annual fortnight there as one of the very pleasantest in our round of visits."

Mrs. HUTCHINSON.
